



Staying safe in an unexpected thunderstorm

Most riders know to postpone a trail ride or outdoor schooling session if the forecast calls for thunderstorms. But how can you best keep yourself and your horse safe when a thunderstorm develops unexpectedly?

Remember that if you can hear the sound of thunder, even if it seems distant, you are in danger. Don't wait for a storm to get right over your head before you seek shelter.

If you can't get to shelter immediately, DISMOUNT. Lightning seeks high points and a mounted rider is a target. Seek safer terrain in lower elevations, away from open fields, water and tall isolated objects. Here's where having trained your horse to tie well will be vital. Tie your horse to a sturdy low bush—NEVER a tree—and move 40-50 feet away. Don't lie down, but squat in what safety experts call the "lightning crouch," with your heels together.

Wait 30 minutes after the last thunder clap before emerging. Watch for the after effects of sudden severe weather, such as wind damage and flash flooding. The more you know about your terrain, the safer you can be in bad weather. And if you are in doubt, stay home.

For a free brochure on horseback riding safety, go to saddleupSAFELY.org or call 859-257-1000 or 1-800-333-8874.

