

## Summer in Orlando: What You Need to Know

Everyone loves to come to Orlando for the sunshine, attractions, and resorts. However, with summer fast approaching, it also comes with some pretty important hazards to take note of. Central Florida is known as the lightening capital of the world, and with Hurricane Season coming up in June, it's not hard to imagine why. During the summer season also comes tourists and a lot of unwanted visitors as well. Here are some typical Florida concerns and ways to keep your family clear of some unwanted situations.

### While swimming:

Florida is one of the perfect places for summer vacation and with the average temperature during summer being around 82 degrees, we head for the water. While Orlando itself does not have beaches, there are plenty of public pools to attend, many of them being at your local YMCA. Swimming is a past time that many residents enjoy, however there are a few safety pointers that we should keep in mind.

- Unfortunately, Florida is a state leader in child drowning, which usually happens early summer as kids are home during summer vacation. The good news however, is that drowning under the age of 18 has been reduced drastically by 73% and continues to decrease over time, and with proper swim education. Adults are no exception to aquatic injury; it has been shown that nine people drown in the water every day. Keep these facts in mind and have your children enrolled in swim lessons, many of which are provided by the YMCA and some are offered through private organizations throughout Orlando.
- If your child is younger than 5, make sure they are taught how to survive in the water. Many places offer these particular classes at reasonable prices, such as the Sharks and Minnows School located here in Orlando.
- Always be aware of your surroundings. Crowded swimming environments make it tough to watch out for each other, so go somewhere that isn't as densely populated. If you plan on swimming in a lake, be sure you know some basic information about where you're traveling to, such as the depth of the lake, its natural wildlife, and possibly even the temperature of the location.

### During bad weather:

The Sunshine State is great to travel to in the summer time, but with the summer time comes Hurricane Season and other unpleasant conditions. This summer alone, it is predicted that we will have 6 to 8 hurricanes, with at least three of them being major hurricanes, and it is expected that 90% of these hurricanes will make landfall. We should keep in mind the different dangers that can compromise our vacations and our well-being. In 2008, Florida was hit the hardest with lightening strikes, causing four fatalities that summer, and Orlando is located in the densest part of it all.

- Teach your family the safest measures during severe weather. Make sure your kids understand that once they hear thunder, it's time to get out of the water. "Once my kids hear the thunder they know to stop what they're doing and get out," says Ruben Rodriguez, an Avalon Park

resident, “ I have young kids who go outside a lot, and if I didn’t teach what to do when bad weather happens, I’m not sure if they would be as safe as they are now”. Rodriguez, like many other people, know that if your family members are not near a safe building that they can enter, have them retreat to an open area and crouch as low as possible.

- Tornadoes are not as likely as they are in the middle United States, but they can happen in our backyards during Hurricane Season. During a tornado warning, have all family members congregate in a part of the home that has no windows or glass nearby, and make sure they lie low.

While visiting attractions:

Did you know that about 17 million visitors attended Disney’s Magic Kingdom in 2008? Visiting the area attractions is one of the main reasons people come to, and possibly live, in Orlando. However, there are shifty people who would gladly take your family at a disadvantage during your travels. Here are some ways to keep your family safe from others who are a little more devious than they appear.

- When you leave your car, make sure nothing is in visible sight. Orlando averaged about 1,689 auto theft incidents between 2008 and 2009, all of which range from breaking into cars for items, to total car theft. If possible, stash valuables in your trunk. Out of sight does equal out of mind in this scenario.
- Wear comfortable clothes and shoes. “It’s really hard to enjoy your day when all you’re thinking about is how much pain you are in,” comments Sarah Espedido, an East Orlando resident, “take some time to plan out what you are wearing beforehand, it really makes traveling much more enjoyable”.
- Speaking of clothes, it is wise to dress up the family in a similar brightly colored shirt. Take note of the color your family members are wearing, as this will make it easier to spot them out of a crowd.

A lot of these tips are common knowledge, but without some statistical backing, many residents overestimate their safety during their travels. By keeping these guidelines in mind, you too can get the most out of your vacation.

