KUALA LUMPUR

Students must learn storm safety tips, says expert

THUNDERSTORM safety education should be made compulsory in schools to prevent mishaps from occurring, says a lightning protection expert.

Universiti Putra Malaysia Centre of Excellence on Lightning Protection director Associate Prof Dr Mohd Zainal Abidin Ab Kadir said society seemed unconcerned about safety as outdoor activities were still conducted during thunderstorms.

“When thunderstorms occur, all indoor and outdoor activities must stop to avoid personal injury and damage to property,” he told Bernama, yesterday.

“The public are only aware of the danger posed by thunderstorms and only take preventive measures after deaths, injuries and damage to property occur.”

On April 3, a student from SMK Sekseny 16, Shah Alam, died and his friend was injured after being struck by lightning while playing in a Petaling district school football tournament at the university.

“The students were still doing sports activities during a thunderstorm. Teachers and parents must be responsible for exposing students to thunderstorm safety just like road safety education in schools,” said Zainal Abidin.

He said that UPM would work with the Education Ministry to ensure an awareness campaign could be held in schools.

“The campaign is not only for teachers and students, but to encourage public participation to ensure safety and to take preventive measures,” he said.

Asked about safety steps during thunderstorms, Zainal Abidin said the public should avoid open spaces and take shelter in buildings.

“During thunderstorms, try not to stand near trees, stay away from metal items and tall pillars,” he said.

He said houses should be equipped with devices to prevent lightning strikes during thunderstorms. “The Housing Ministry should introduce legislation where all houses must be installed with anti-lightning devices.”

Zainal advised the public to check the weather when planning outdoor activities and avoid them if there were signs of thunderstorms. — Bernama