

LIGHTNING SAFETY



LIGHTNING SAFETY: ON AND OFF THE JOB

Lightning is the #2 storm killer in the U.S., killing more than hurricanes or tornadoes on average. Only floods kill more. But the real story of lightning isn't the deaths, it's the injuries. Only about 10% of those struck are killed; 90% survive, but of those survivors, many suffer life-long severe injury and disability. These injuries are primarily neurological, with a wide range of symptoms and are sometimes difficult to diagnose. Lightning also causes about \$5 billion of economic loss each year in the U.S.

Education is key! The vast majority of lightning casualties can be easily, quickly, and cheaply avoided if the proper rules are followed.

LIGHTNING SAFETY FOR OUTSIDE EMPLOYEES

If you can see lightning or hear thunder, activate your safety plan. Resume activities only when lightning and thunder have not been observed for thirty minutes.

Preparedness can reduce the risk of lightning hazard and raise safety levels. Lightning is a frequent weather hazard impacting outdoor recreation and work situations.

Lightning's distance from you is easy to calculate: If you hear thunder, it and the associated lightning are within audible range...about 6-8 miles away. The distance between Strike A and Strike B can also be 6-8 miles.

Advance planning is the single most important means to achieve lightning safety. The following steps are suggested:

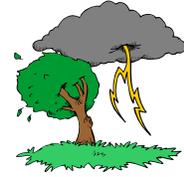
1. Designate a responsible person to monitor weather conditions. An inexpensive portable NOAA weather radio will provide regular weather condition updates.
2. An emergency procedure should include: **Suspend activities, Evacuate people, Monitor conditions, Resume activities.** Identify safe and unsafe locations before hand.
3. People who have been struck by lightning do not carry an electrical charge and are safe to handle. Apply First Aid immediately, if you are qualified to do so. Get emergency help promptly.

SAFE AREAS INCLUDE:

- Fully enclosed metal vehicle with rubber tires and with the windows up.
- Substantial and permanent buildings.

UNSAFE AREAS INCLUDE:

- Small structures including huts & rain shelters.
- Nearby metallic objects like fences, gates, instrumentation and electrical equipment, wires, and power poles.
- Also---**AVOID** trees, **AVOID** water, **AVOID** open fields, **AVOID** using the (hard wired) telephone and headsets.



LIGHTNING SAFETY CROUCH:

If hopelessly isolated from shelter during close-in lightning, adopt a low crouching position with feet together and hands over your ears and remove any metal objects from your person.

PERSONAL LIGHTNING SAFETY

1. Plan in advance your evacuation and safety measures. When you first see lightning or hear thunder, activate your emergency plan. That is the time to go to a building or a vehicle. Lightning often precedes rain, so don't wait for the rain to begin before suspending activities.
2. If you can see it (lightning) flee it; if you can hear it (thunder), clear it!
3. If outdoors...**Avoid** water; **Avoid** high ground; **Avoid** open spaces; **Avoid** all metal objects including electric wires, fences, machinery, motors, power tools, etc. Unsafe places include underneath canopies, small picnic or rain shelters, or near trees. Where possible find shelter in a substantial building or a fully enclosed metal vehicle such as a car, truck or a van with the windows completely shut. If lightning is striking nearby or your hair is standing on end and/or you hear "crackling noises" when you are outside, you should, **CROUCH DOWN**. Put your feet together. Place your hands over your ears to minimize hearing damage from thunder. **AVOID PROXIMITY** (minimum of 15 ft.) to other people.
4. If indoors...**Avoid** water. Stay away from doors and windows. Do not use the telephone. Take off headsets. Turn off, unplug, and stay away from appliances, computers, power tools, & TV sets. Lightning may strike exterior electric and phone lines, inducing shocks to inside equipment.
5. Suspend activities for 30 minutes after the last observation of lightning or thunder.

Information for this brochure was obtained from the National Lightning Safety Institute; www.lightningsafety.com.