

Lightning

Lightning is the second leading cause of deaths caused by weather. On average, sixty-six reported lightning fatalities occur each year. However, only 10% of those who are struck by lightning are killed, the other 90% survive with varying degrees of disabilities. On average about 300 injuries are reported from lightning strikes. Many others strikes go unreported. You can be injured on the job, while engaged in recreational activities or other situations including while you are inside a building.

Each flash of lightning is a potential killer. A person can be struck by the main lightning stroke; others are struck as current moves in and along the ground. Many people take protective measures during the severe part of a thunderstorm; others leave themselves vulnerable to being struck by lightning as the thunderstorm approaches, departs or is nearby.

Lightning can strike as far as ten miles from the rain area of a storm. That is about as far as you can hear thunder. If you can hear thunder, you are within striking distance of lightning, and need to take precautions immediately.

SEEK A SAFE PLACE

- A vehicle can be a safe place to be if proper actions are taken. Hard-topped cars, SUVs, minivans, buses are safe vehicles. Soft-topped convertibles are **not** safe. If you are in a vehicle, make sure all the doors are closed and the windows are rolled up. Do **not** touch any metal surfaces. Do **not** use HAM radios in a thunderstorm, as your antenna may be the focus of lightning. Motorcycles and bikes are **not** safe to use during a thunderstorm.
- A safe location from lightning strikes is a building with surrounding walls and a roof. Picnic shelters, dugouts, sheds, golf shelters, camping tents, greenhouses, and other partially open or small structures are **not** safe. Even in a safe building, you should:
 - a. Stay away from showers, sinks, hot tubs, etc. and electronic equipment such as televisions, radios, and computers.
 - b. Avoid contact with corded phones.
 - c. Avoid contact with electrical equipment or cords. If you plan to unplug any electronic equipment, do so well before the storm arrives.
 - d. Stay away from windows and doors, and stay off porches.
 - e. Do not lie on concrete floors and do not lean against concrete walls.

IF YOU CANNOT FIND A SAFE PLACE

- Keep informed on the weather forecast. Know when thunderstorms and lightning might happen.
- Do not seek shelter under tall isolated trees.
- Do not seek shelter in partially enclosed buildings.
- Stay away from tall isolated objects.
- If camping, do not put your tent in middle of an empty field.
- Avoid touching items that are wet such as rope.
- Stay away from metal objects such as fences, poles, backpacks.

As always, remember your pets that are outside. A doghouse is not a safe place for your pet and a dog chained to a tree is not safe as lightning may strike the tree, injuring or killing your pet.

You can be safe from lightning by taking precautions before, during and after a thunderstorm.