



Lightning and Storm Safety

How to minimize your risk during lightning storms

What is the Problem?

There is no safe place outdoors when thunderstorms hit.¹ Too many people wait too long to get to a safe place when thunderstorms approach.² These delayed actions can lead to lightning injuries and deaths.³ It is important to always be prepared for dangerous weather.⁴ Summer is the peak time of the year for lightning strikes and lightning fires.⁵

Facts⁶

- Lightning causes an average of 62 deaths and 300 injuries in the United States each year.
- 449 deaths were recorded from lightning strikes between 1998 and 2008.



Prevention Tips

The number of lightning injuries and casualties in the United States can be reduced by following these tips:

- Monitor weather conditions and have a plan, before weather becomes a threat.⁷
- If a thunderstorm threatens, get to a safe place immediately. Once inside, avoid contact with corded phones, electrical equipment, and windows and doors.⁸
- Wait approximately 30 minutes after you hear the last thunder before going back outside.⁹
- There is no safe place outside during a thunderstorm, however if a safe location is not nearby, avoid open fields, water, wet items, and metal objects, and stay away from tall, isolated trees or other tall objects.¹⁰
- If you are in or on open water, go to land and find shelter as soon as possible.¹¹
- If you feel your hair stand on end, that means lightning is about to strike, squat low to the ground on the balls of your feet. Place your hands over your ears and your head between your knees. This is a last resort when a building or hard-topped vehicle is not available for shelter purposes.¹²



Plan of the Week (POW):

NEVER take shelter in a rain shelter, small shed, or open vehicle-they are not safe.¹³
ALWAYS remember “When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors!”¹⁴ **ALWAYS** call 9-1-1 and get medical care immediately if you or anyone else is struck by lightning.¹⁵

References

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NMCPHC Injury Prevention and Violence Free Living Webpage
<http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/health-promotion/injury-violence-free-living/Pages/injury-violence-free-living.aspx>

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