



Lightning/Thunderstorm Safety Tips

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Lightning/Thunderstorm Safety Tips

This is the time of the year when we are confronted with lightning and thunderstorms so we wanted to share with you the following safety tips to prepare you for these weather conditions.

Do you know what to do if you are caught in the open during a thunderstorm or you feel tingling or your hair standing on end?

Lightning causes around 100 deaths in the U.S. annually (more than hurricanes and tornadoes combined).

WHEN INSIDE:

- Avoid using the telephone (except for emergencies) or
- Avoid using electrical appliances.
- Do not take a bath or shower.

IF CAUGHT OUTDOORS:

- Go to a safe shelter immediately! Such as inside a sturdy building. A hard top automobile with the windows up can also offer fair protection.
- If you are boating or swimming, get out of the water immediately and move to a safe shelter away from the water!
- If you are in a wooded area, seek shelter under a thick growth of relatively small trees.
- If you feel your hair standing on end, squat with your head between your knees. Do not lie flat!
- Avoid: isolated trees or other tall objects, bodies of water, sheds, fences, convertible automobiles, tractors, and motorcycles.

LIGHTNING SAFETY TIPS:

Nearly 1,800 thunderstorms are occurring at any moment around the world - that's 16 million storms. Thunderstorms affect relatively small areas when compared with hurricanes and winter storms. The typical thunderstorm is 15 miles in diameter and lasts an average of 30 minutes. Despite their small size, all thunderstorms are dangerous.

If you plan to be outdoors, check the latest weather forecast to avoid getting caught in a storm. The signs of an impending storm – towering thunderheads, darkening skies, lightning, increasing winds - are your signal to seek shelter inside a home, a large building or an all-metal car (not a convertible). Lightning may strike some miles from the parent cloud. Precautions should be taken even though the thunderstorm is not directly overhead.

If you are caught outside, do not stand under a large tree or a utility pole or any other object that is the tallest object on the landscape. Avoid projecting above the landscape yourself. In a forest, seek shelter in a low area under a thick growth of small trees. In open areas, go to low place, such as a ditch.

Get off or away from open water, tractors and other metal farm equipment or small metal vehicles such as motorcycles, bicycles, golf carts, etc. Put down your golf clubs and take off golf shoes. Stay away from wire fences, clotheslines, metal pipes and rails. If you are in a group in the open, spread out, keeping people several yards apart. At home, do not use the telephone except in emergencies. Unplug unnecessary appliances. Do not take a bath or shower. Prepare for a power outage by locating flashlights, a battery operated radio and batteries. The next time you are caught in a thunderstorm, keep these pointers in mind. They could save your life.

Remain indoors during thunderstorms. If you are out in the open, seek shelter in the following places:

- Large metal frame buildings
- Enclosed vehicles with metal tops, cars and buses
- Large unprotected buildings
- Enclosed metal boats or ships
- Dwellings or other buildings which are protected against lightning

Avoid the following locations if you are caught in a thunderstorm:

- Hilltops and ridges
- Open fields, sports fields, golf courses
- Swimming pools, lakes and seashores
- Areas on top of buildings
- Parking lots and tennis courts
- Standing under isolated trees
- Standing near metal fences, flag poles, pipes, clothes-lines, overhead wires and railroad tracks

The following places also offer little or no protection from lightning:

- Small unprotected buildings, sheds, etc.
- Vehicles (non-metal top or open)
- Tents and temporary shelters
- Trailers (non-metal or open)

Follow one of these rules when it is not possible to choose a location that offers good protection from lightning:

- Seek low areas.
- Seek buildings, tents and shelters in low areas.
- Seek dense woods.

If your skin starts tingling and your hair stands on end (signs that lightning is about to strike), squat down and place your hands on your knees. Do not lie flat on the ground or place your hands on the ground.

If forecasters predict that you are at risk of thunderstorms, stay alert. Listen for any severe thunderstorm watches or warnings.

Protect yourself from deadly lightning. If you are indoors, stay away from electrical appliances. Use the phone as little as possible.

If you are caught outdoors, keep yourself low to the ground. Maintain a safe distance from highly conductive objects, such as trees. For trees, a distance of twice their height is considered a safe distance.

Remember that severe thunderstorms may produce tornadoes. Be prepared to seek shelter in the basement of your home or in the lowest level of the structure. Keep away from windows.