



Lightning - “When thunder roars...”

Nearly 400 people in the United States are struck by lightning each year. On average, 60 people will not survive a direct lightning strike, while many others will suffer permanent neurological disabilities. Most of these tragedies can be avoided with a few simple precautions. When thunderstorms threaten, get to a safe place.

Lightning and thunderstorm actions:

- “*When thunder roars, go indoors*” because no place outside is safe when lightning is in the area. Postpone outdoor activities.
- Get inside a home, building, or hardtop automobile (not a convertible). Although you may be injured if lightning strikes your car, you are much safer inside a vehicle than outside.
- Remember, rubber-soled shoes and rubber tires provide NO protection from lightning. However, the steel frame of a hard-topped vehicle provides increased protection if you are not touching metal.
- Secure outdoor objects that could blow away or cause damage.
- Shutter windows and secure outside doors. If shutters are not available, close window blinds, shades, or curtains.
- Avoid showering or bathing. Plumbing and bathroom fixtures can conduct electricity.
- Use a corded telephone only for emergencies. Cordless and cellular telephones are safe to use.
- Unplug appliances and other electrical items such as computers and turn off air conditioners. Power surges from lightning can cause serious damage.
- Use your battery-operated NOAA Weather Radio for updates from local officials.
- It is normally safe to resume outdoor activities 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder is heard.

Avoid:

- Natural lightning rods such as a tall, isolated tree in an open area.
- Hilltops, open fields, the beach, or a boat on the water.
- Isolated sheds or other small structures in open areas.
- Anything metal—tractors, farm equipment, motorcycles, golf carts, golf clubs, and bicycles.

Summary of Lightning Safety Tips for Inside the Home

- Avoid contact with corded phones
- Avoid contact with electrical equipment or cords. If you plan to unplug any electronic equipment, do so well before the storm arrives.
- Avoid contact with plumbing. Do not wash your hands, do not take a shower, do not wash dishes, and do not do laundry.
- Stay away from windows and doors, and stay off porches.
- Do not lie on concrete floors and do not lean against concrete walls.

Emergency Aid:

When rendering aid to someone struck by lightning...

- **Breathing** - if breathing has stopped, begin mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.
- **Heartbeat** - if the heart has stopped, administer CPR.
- **Pulse** - if the victim has a pulse and is breathing, look for other possible injuries.
- **Check** for other injuries. Look for burns where lightning may have contacted the body. Be alert for nervous system damage, broken bones, and loss of hearing and eyesight.

Still Have Questions? Need Help?

Contact Paul Latham, USF System Emergency Manager

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