

Lightning safety

Introduction

Lightning has been the second largest storm killer in the U.S. for the last 40 years. Documented lightning injuries in the U.S. average about 300 per year, including 55-60 fatalities. Lightning often strikes outside of heavy rain and may occur up to 10 miles away from any rainfall.

Watch for developing thunderstorms

- Clouds that grow vertically into towering cumulus clouds are often the first sign of a developing thunderstorm.

When thunderstorms threaten, don't start projects you can't stop quickly

- Pay attention to the daily forecasts so you know what to expect during the day.
- Pay attention to early signs of thunderstorms: high winds, dark clouds, rain, distant thunder or lightning.

Objects and equipment to avoid during thunderstorms

- Stay off and away from tall objects like: rooftops, scaffolding, ladders, and large equipment such as bulldozers, cranes, backhoes and tractors.
- Do not touch materials or surfaces that can conduct electricity, including metal scaffold-

ing, metal equipment, utility lines, water, water pipes and plumbing.

Use the 30-30 rule

- When you see lightning, count the seconds until you hear thunder. If that time is 30 seconds or less, the storm is within 6 miles and is dangerous.
- Seek shelter immediately. A safe shelter is an enclosed building. A metal topped vehicle is also safe. Avoid open-air structures and tall trees.
- Wait at least 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder before leaving shelter.
- Don't be fooled by sunshine or blue sky.

Helping a lightning strike victim

- Call 911 immediately. Start CPR if necessary. Cardiac arrest, burns, and nerve damage are common injuries. With proper treatment, most survive.

Summary

Remember the 30-30 Rule and play it safe: if you hear thunder, finish what you are doing and go indoors.