



# Lightning Strike Awareness

Lightning is the number two storm killer in the U.S., killing more than hurricanes or tornadoes on average. Only about 20% of those struck are killed, however, out of the survivors, many suffer life-long severe injuries and disability. An individual's chances of getting hit by lightning are greatest at the beginning and end of a thunderstorm and lightning hits most often in late afternoon in spring and summer. States that have the highest rates of lightning strikes include Florida, Arkansas, Mississippi, New Mexico, and Wyoming.

## Do's and Don'ts

Ensure lightning strike risks are evaluated and noted on the work site JSEA.

### Where to Go

- A large enclosed structure with plumbing and electrical wiring, such as shopping centers, schools, office buildings, and private residences. If lightning strikes the building, the plumbing and wiring will conduct the electricity more efficiently than a human body.
- If no buildings are available, then a fully enclosed vehicle with the windows up is an alternative. Do not touch the doors or anything metal.
- If you are out in the open and have nowhere to go, squat down with your feet together and only let your feet touch the ground. By not touching much of the ground, you have less chance that the lightning will move across the ground to you.



### Where NOT to Go

- Buildings that have exposed openings (even if they are grounded). These include beach shacks, metal sheds, picnic shelters/pavilions, carports, or porches.
- Convertible vehicles offer no safety from lightning, even if the top is "up" or vehicles with open cabs (golf carts, tractors, and construction equipment)
- Out in the open lying flat on the ground



### What NOT to Do

- Lightning can travel great distances through power lines, especially in rural areas. Do not use electrical appliances, ESPECIALLY corded telephones, computer with a modem, plug-in power tools or machines.
- Do not be the tallest object or stand next to metal objects in an area (pipes, light poles, door frames, metal fences, radio towers).
- Stand out in the open.
- Stand under a tree.
- Stand next to water both indoor or out (ponds, running water, bath/showers, washing hands).
- Do not wear metal jewelry or big belt buckles



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## Guidance



Lightning strikes can extend 6 to 10 miles from the edge of the storm. Several recommendations exist on when to stop outdoor activities and seek shelter.

- **“Hear it Fear it” and “See it Flee it”** – recommends at first site of lightning and sound of thunder, the danger is close enough, and stopping outdoor activities should be considered.
- **30/30 Rule** - A Practice recommended by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and The National Lightning Safety Institute (NLSI) is the 30/30 Rule. When you see lightning, count the time until you hear thunder. If this time is **30 seconds** or less (5 seconds = 1 mile), seek proper shelter. If you can't see the lightning, just hearing the thunder is a good back-up rule. **Wait 30 minutes** or more after hearing the last thunder before leaving shelter

30 % of victims are struck under blue sky before the storm arrives. 60% of victims are struck under blue skies after the storms have passed.

## First Aid Treatment

- Immediately call 911 and dispatch (970-247-6916) for assistance. .
- If the scene is considered safe, you can begin treating the victim. No residual electrical charge remains after a lightning strike.
- **Treat the dead first.** A high percentage of lightning victims can be revived.
- All deaths from lightning are from cardiac arrest and stopped breathing at the time of the strike. CPR and mouth-to-mouth-resuscitation are the recommended first aid, respectively
- Others may be stunned or otherwise injured and also need attention. Check for burns, especially at fingers, toes, next to buckles and body metal (jewelry). Give first aid for shock.
- Do not let the victim walk around. Stay with the victim until help arrives