Weather Safety: Lightning

Lightning Safety for You and Your Family

What You Should Know About Being Caught Outside Near a Thunderstorm

There is no safe place outside in a thunderstorm. Plan ahead to avoid this dangerous situation! If you're outside and hear thunder, the only way to significantly reduce your risk of becoming a lightning casualty is to get inside a substantial building or hard-topped metal vehicle as fast as you can. In addition, you should avoid the following situations which could increase your risk of becoming a lightning casualty. Remember – there is no substitute for getting to a safe place.

- **Avoid open areas.** Don't be the tallest object in the area.
- **Stay away from isolated tall trees, towers or utility poles.** Lightning tends to strike the taller objects in an area.
- **Stay away from metal conductors such as wires or fences.** Metal does not attract lightning, but lightning can travel long distances through it.

If you are with a group of people, spread out. While this actually increases the chance that someone might get struck, it tends to prevent multiple casualties, and increases the chances that someone could help if a person is struck.

Act Fast If Someone Is Struck by Lightning!

- **Lightning victims do not carry an electrical charge, are safe to touch, and need urgent medical attention.** Cardiac arrest is the immediate cause of death for those who die. Some deaths can be prevented if the victim receives the proper first aid immediately.
- **Call for help.** Call 9-1-1 or your local ambulance service.
- **Give first aid.** Do not delay CPR if the person is unresponsive or not breathing. Use an Automatic External Defibrillator if one is available.
- **If possible, move the victim to a safer place.** Lightning can strike twice. Don't become a victim.

Stay Informed About Storms Listen to NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards

There are an estimated 25 million cloud-to-ground lightning flashes in the U.S. each year. While the National Weather Service (NWS) issues severe thunderstorm watches and warnings for storms that produce damaging wind or hail, watches and warnings are NOT issued for lightning. When you hear thunder, there is an immediate lightning danger.

As a further safety measure, consider purchasing a portable, battery-powered, tone-alert NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards. The radio will allow you to monitor any short-term forecasts for changing weather conditions. The tone-alert feature can automatically alert you when the NWS issues a severe thunderstorm watch or warning.

For More Information

NWS lightning links, forecasts, assessments:
http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov
NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards:
http://www.weather.gov/nwr
American Red Cross:
http://www.redcross.org
Federal Emergency Management Agency:
http://www.fema.gov

Town of Islip
Office of Emergency Management
401 Main Street, Islip, NY 11751
631-224-5730

Remember, When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors!

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