

WHEN THUNDER ROARS, GO INDOORS

For inquiries regarding this safety alert, contact the HSEQ department at 985.868.1950.

Summer is the peak season for one of the nation's deadliest weather phenomena, lightning. But don't be fooled, lightning strikes year round. The National Weather Service goal is to safeguard U.S. residents from lightning. In the United States, an average of 59 people are killed each year by lightning. In 2009, 34 people died due to lightning strikes. People struck by lightning suffer from a variety of long-term, debilitating symptoms, including memory loss, attention deficits, sleep disorders, numbness, dizziness, stiffness in joints, irritability, fatigue, weakness, muscle spasms, depression, and an inability to sit for long.

Lightning is a serious danger. Here are a few **safety tips** to help you prepare for the next storm:

BEFORE LIGHTNING STRIKES...

Keep an eye on the sky. Look for darkening skies, flashes of light, or increasing wind. Listen for the sound of thunder.

If you can hear thunder, you are close enough to the storm to be struck by lightning.

If Thunder is Heard... The Lightning is...

- 5 seconds after a Flash = 1 mile away
- 10 seconds after a Flash = 2 miles away
- 15 seconds after a Flash = 3 miles away
- 20 seconds after a Flash = 4 miles away
- 25 seconds after a Flash = 5 miles away
- 30 seconds after a Flash = 6 miles away

Go to safe shelter immediately!

Listen to NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio, or television for the latest weather forecasts.

WHEN A STORM APPROACHES...

- Find shelter in a building or car. Keep car windows closed and avoid convertibles.
- Telephone lines and metal pipes can conduct electricity. Unplug appliances. Avoid using the telephone or any electrical appliances.
- Avoid taking a bath or shower, or running water for any other purpose.
- Turn off the air conditioner. Power surges from lightning can overload the compressor, resulting in a costly repair job.
- Draw blinds and shades over windows. If windows break due to objects blown by the wind, the shades will prevent glass from shattering into your home.

BE A VERY SMALL TARGET!

If you feel your hair standing on end, and/or hear "crackling noises," you are in lightning's electric field. If caught outside during close-in lightning, immediately remove metal objects (including baseball cap), place your feet together, duck your head, and crouch down low in baseball catcher's stance with hands on knees. Squat low to the ground. Place your hands on your knees with your head between them. Make yourself the smallest target possible. Do not lie flat on the ground -- this will make you a larger target!

AFTER THE STORM PASSES...

- Stay away from storm-damaged areas.
- Listen to the radio for information and instructions.

IF SOMEONE IS STRUCK BY LIGHTNING...

- People struck by lightning carry no electrical charge and can be handled safely.
- Call for help. Get someone to dial 9-1-1 or your local Emergency Medical Services (EMS) number.
- The injured person has received an electrical shock and may be burned, both where they were struck and where the electricity left their body. Check for burns in both places.
- Give first aid. If breathing has stopped, begin rescue breathing. If the heart has stopped beating, a trained person should give CPR.

