

Thunderstorm Awareness Guide

All thunderstorms produce lightning. If you can hear thunder, you are close enough to the storms to be struck. Take protective actions. Move inside. It need not be raining!

Lightning can strike ten (10) to fifteen (15) miles away from the rain portion of the storm! These lightning strikes come out of the upper portions of the thunderstorm cloud, which extends ten (10) to fifty (50) miles into the atmosphere.

In general, lightning will travel to the easiest route from the cloud to ground, which means that it often strikes the highest object. Therefore, **a simple rule is 'do not make yourself the tallest object or stand near the tallest object in your immediate surrounding'.**

- Do not stand in an open field
- Do not stand on a beach
- Do not stand on a hill-top
- Do not stand under an isolated or large tree, or near a pole.
- Do not stay out on a boat

When lightning strikes, the current will travel through the object, along the ground, along wire, metal, and water. Most lightning injuries occur in this manner. The electrical current will travel the easiest route.

- Stay away from metal objects such as fences, poles, equipment, pipes, etc.
- Get rid of metal objects on your body such as coins, money clips, hair- pins, jewelry, etc.
- Stay away from water
- Inside, stay away from electrical appliances, televisions, and telephones.
- **Only use the telephone in an emergency (including cell phones)**
- If caught outside and a thunderstorm approaches: Move into a building and stay away from doors and windows.
- If a building is not available, get inside a car (hardtop--not a convertible) and keep windows rolled up.
- If there are no cars or buildings nearby:
 - In a forest, look for a low area under thick growth of small trees.
 - In an open area, go to a low place, preferably a ravine or valley.
 - If in a group of people, spread out, keeping several yards apart from each other.

If you feel your hair stand on end, you are in immediate danger of being struck. Unless you can instantly jump inside a shelter, drop to a crouching position, bending forward and keeping your feet close together with your hands on your knees. The purpose of this is to be as low to the ground as possible, and yet have as little of your body surface touching the ground as possible.