

Safety First



When Lightning Strikes . . .

Although the chances of being hit by lightning in your lifetime are very slim, safety around it is something we should all know about.

According to the National Lightning Safety Institute, most victims of lightning strikes survive, but they may suffer serious side effects and lightning can still be deadly. The National Weather Service reports that approximately 100 people are killed every year by lightning, which is more than the number of people killed by tornadoes or hurricanes annually.

The following tips may help you to avoid weather-related injuries in case you are in the middle of a bad storm.

- When you see bad weather coming, it's time to head indoors. Do not wait for the rain to fall before heading inside because lightning often comes before the rain.

- If you want to tell how far away lightning is, start counting the time in between the flash of lightning and the clap of thunder. For every five seconds that pass, the lightning is one mile away. If there was 15 seconds in between them, then it is three miles away.

- To avoid being shocked when you are in your house, make sure everything is unplugged, do not go near or use water, stay away from doors and windows and do not use the telephone. You can also be shocked if you are using electrical appliances or equipment and the power lines are struck by lightning. The electrical surge can travel through electrical lines into your home and into whoever is connected to those lines.

- If you are caught outdoors when a storm comes, make sure that you are not the tallest thing in the area. Avoid open fields and stay away from water and elevated areas. If lightning strikes near you, get as far from other people as you can, crouch low to the ground with your feet together and cover your ears.

- If someone is struck by lightning, call for emergency help immediately. A person who has been struck by lightning does not carry an electrical charge that could shock you if you try to help the victim, so it is fine to administer CPR and first aid if necessary.