

National Weather Service Lightning Safety Awareness Multi-Level Plan from the AMS (American Meteorological Society)

Recommendations for Lightning Safety

www.nws.noaa.gov

Level #1: Obtain a weather forecast beforehand to avoid exposure to the lightning hazard.

Level #2: Identify and stay within traveling range of proper shelter.

- **30-30 Rule**
 - When you see lightning, count the time until you hear thunder.
 - If it is 30 seconds or less, go immediately to a safer place (if you hear thunder, it is a good indication you need to go anyway).
 - After the storm has dissipated, wait 30 minutes or more after hearing the last thunder.
 - Be aware if you need a longer evacuation time.
 - This rule does not necessarily protect you from the first strike.

Level #3: Safe Location

- A large, fully enclosed, substantially constructed building (house, school, library, or other public building).
- Substantial implies wiring and plumbing, which can conduct lightning current safely to ground.
- Stay away from corded telephones, electrical appliances, lightning fixtures, ham radio microphones, electric sockets, plumbing, and open windows or doorways.
- Inner rooms are safest.
- An enclosed vehicle with a solid metal roof and metal sides is reasonable second choice, but...
 - Avoid contact with conducting paths going outside (as in buildings).
 - Close windows, lean away from the door, hands in lap, and don't touch the steering wheel, ignition, gear shifter, or radio.
 - Convertibles, cars with fiberglass or plastic shells and open framed vehicles are not suitable lightning shelters.

Level #4: If you can't seek a safer location, do the following...

- Proceed from a higher to lower elevation.
- Avoid wide-open areas, beaches, and golf courses.
- Avoid tall, isolated objects like trees, poles, and lightning posts.
- Avoid water related activities such as swimming (indoor also) boating and fishing along with fountains.
- Avoid open vehicles like farm tractors, cableless construction machinery, riding lawn mowers, golf-carts, and sun roofs in cars.

- Avoid unprotected open structures such as picnic pavilions, rain shelters, and bus stops.
- Avoid contact with metal fences, bleachers, and other long metal structures.
- No trees.

Level#5: Sometimes lightning will provide a few seconds of warning by...

- Hair standing on end.
- Skin will tingle.
- Light metal objects will vibrate.
- You'll hear a crackling or "kee-kee" sound.

If any of these occurs, and you're in a group, spread out so there are several body lengths between each person. Then use the lightning crouch (put your feet together, squat down, tuck your head, and cover your ears). When the immediate threat has passed, proceed to the safest place possible.

Level #6: When there is a victim...

- Call 911
- Begin treatment as soon as possible with CPR or mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Often time's victims can be revived.
- The victim does not hold a charge so there is no harm to the caregiver.
- If the risk is on going, consider moving the victim to a safer location.

****** This is not 100% total safety, but will help minimize the lightning hazard.**

****** Heat lightning is actually lightning from a thunderstorm too far away for the thunder to be heard. However, the storm may be moving in your direction.**