

News Release

Know How to Stay Safe from Lightning Strikes

A rainy day can all too quickly turn into a disaster when thunder and lightning are present. The high level of voltage in lightning is not something with which to take chances. According to data collected by the National Weather Service, 287 lightning fatalities were reported between 2006 and 2014. Knowing how to stay protected in a storm is key to preventing a tragedy and costly injuries.

Molly Hall, executive director of the Energy Education Council's Safe Electricity program, points out, "It is very important to keep in mind that there is no safe place from lightning when you are outside. It is important to heed the advice of the National Weather Service, 'When thunder roars, go indoors.'"

The best way to stay safe from the threat of lightning is to stay inside and avoid interacting with any appliances, electrical outlets and wires, cables, phone lines, water, and piping.

Preparation is also important. Listen to, watch, or download weather forecasts so that you know if there is a chance of severe weather. If there is a chance, reschedule the activity or make sure you can get to a safe location if a thunderstorm develops. Safe shelters are in fully enclosed buildings or in a fully enclosed metal-topped vehicle.

Open vehicles, such as convertibles, motorcycles, and golf carts, are not safe. Open structures — such as porches, gazebos, pavilions, and baseball dugouts — are not safe either.

Before the thunderstorm, turn off or unplug corded appliances, stay away from television sets, and do not depend on surge protectors to absorb a lightning strike. Turn off your air conditioner to help protect the compressor from a potential power surge and costly repairs from the storm.

Also, during the thunderstorm, do not lie on concrete floors and avoid leaning on concrete walls. Lightning can travel through any metal wires or bars in concrete walls or flooring.

After a storm, wait until 30 minutes have passed without lightning or thunder before returning outside. Lightning can strike up to 10 miles from the area in which it is raining. If a person is struck by lightning, call 911 and care for the victim immediately. You are not in danger of being shocked or electrocuted by the victim.

The potential long-term effects of a lightning strike can be just as brutal as the accident itself, so take precautions. Check weather forecasts, and plan to be inside a safe shelter.

The Energy Education Council is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to promoting electrical safety and energy efficiency. Established in 1952, the Council serves as a forum for diverse utility and energy organizations to collaborate on the mutually vital issues of efficiency and safety. Learn more at:

EnergyEdCouncil.org

SafeElectricity.org

EfficiencyResource.org