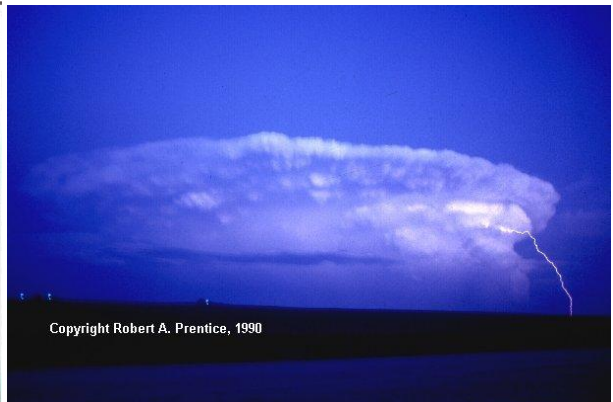


Thunder & Lightning Safety Guidelines

“When Thunder’s Outside, Know Where to Hide!”

Outdoor Lightning Safety

- ✓ **No place is absolutely safe from lightning**; *however*, some places are much safer than others.
- ✓ If you hear thunder, find a safe building. A **safe building** is one that is fully enclosed with a roof, walls and floor, and has plumbing or wiring. Examples include a home, school, church, hotel, office building or shopping center. Once inside, stay away from showers, sinks, bath tubs, and electronic equipment such as TVs, radios, corded telephones and computers.
- ✓ **Unsafe buildings** include car ports, open garages, covered patios, picnic shelters, beach pavilions, golf shelters, tents of any kinds, baseball dugouts, sheds and greenhouses.
- ✓ If there isn’t a safe building to take shelter, take shelter in a car that has a hard-top.
- ✓ If you hear thunder and there are clear skies, be cautious!
 - *Bolts from the Blue* are horizontal lightning flashes that seem like they came from the clear blue sky. They actually come from a cloud that is 5-10+ miles away. The visuals below illustrates *Bolts from the Blue*:



- ✓ Use the 30/30 rule. When you see lightning and the thunder follows in 30 seconds, the thunder clouds are very close. You should immediately postpone all outside activities and take shelter! Take a 30 minute intermission before resuming outdoor activities.

- ✓ Use the Flash-to-Bang method. This is when you estimate how far the storm is from you. For example, if you see lightning and it takes 10 seconds before you hear the thunder, then the lightning is 2 miles away from you. (10 divided by 5 = 2 miles, too close!)

- ✓ **If there is not a safe building to take shelter**
 - Stay away from tall, isolated trees or other tall objects. If you are in a forest, stay near a lower stand of trees. Stay out of open fields. Lightning tends to strike the tallest object or person in an open field.
 - Be the lowest object. Lightning strikes the tallest object. If in an open area, crouch down if needed. This will lower the chances of being struck by lightning.
 - Use the “Lightning Crouch.” USE ONLY AS A DESPERATE LAST RESORT. This requires you to put your feet together while squatting down, tucking your head, and covering your ears. After the immediate threat of lightning has passed, seek the nearest shelter immediately! (If you are with a group of people, make sure you spread out before performing the lightning crouch. This will lessen the chances of being struck by lightning.)

- ✓ Stay away from water, wet items (such as ropes) and metal objects (such as fences and poles). Water and metal are excellent conductors of electricity. The current from a lightning flash will easily travel for long distances

- ✓ Avoid leaning against vehicles. Stay off of bicycles and motorcycles.

- ✓ **What to do if someone is struck by lightning**
 - Call for help. Call 9-1-1 or your local ambulance service. Get medical attention as quickly as possible.
 - Give first aid. If the victim has stopped breathing, begin rescue breathing. If the heart has stopped beating, a trained person should give CPR. If the person has a pulse and is breathing, address any other injuries.
 - Check for burns. The injured person has received an electric shock and may be burned. Being struck by lightning can also cause nervous system damage, broken bones, and loss of hearing or eyesight. People struck by lightning carry no electrical charge that can shock other people. You can examine them without risk.

- ✓ **Stay Informed About the Storm**

Listen to NOAA Weather Radio or local media for the latest severe thunderstorm WATCHES and WARNINGS. Severe thunderstorms are those storms with winds in excess of 58 mph or hail larger than 3/4 inches in diameter. When conditions are favorable for severe weather to develop, a severe thunderstorm WATCH is issued.

- ✓ Weather Service personnel use information from weather radar, satellite, lightning detection, spotters, and other sources to issue severe thunderstorm WARNINGS for areas where severe weather is imminent. Remember, however, that ALL thunderstorms produce deadly lightning.

- ✓ For more information visit the National Weather Service web site at <http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov/outdoors.htm>

*** Remember, lightning is the cause of more deaths than tornadoes. Do not take lightning lightly! ***