

SAFETY AGAINST LIGHTNING

Tips for Your Personal Safety

Your life is precious. Please spend a few minutes of your time to go through this message from CDMM carefully, and free yourselves from the fear of thunderstorms and lightning for all times. It is unfortunate that people are either killed or disabled by lightning just because they keep watching the beauty of rain, thunder and lightning outdoors or take a shelter under a tree or continue with boating, swimming, fishing, climbing, playing, golfing or talking over telephone, unmindful of the damage lightning could inflict.

Remember, no place on the earth is safe against thunder storms and lightning, especially when you are outdoors. All thunder storms are dangerous despite their usually small area of coverage (typically 24 km in diameter). Lightning could strike all exposed objects including buildings, water tanks, hill tops, vehicles, electrical poles, animals and people. There are no exceptions or exemptions. [Here are a few tips for your safety:](#)

1. When you see lightning and hear thunder of a storm even before you could count 30, it is a sure warning signal that you should rush indoors to protect yourselves.
2. If no shelter is available in the neighborhood of where you are, then seek protection by getting in to a hard topped vehicle with windows closed. You are much safer inside a car than outside because steel frame of a vehicle usually provides protection, if you be careful not to touch metal.
3. Keep distance from vulnerable locations like isolated trees or isolated tall structures. Lightning can strike the same place twice and can spread out nearly 20m after striking the ground.

4. If you get a tingling sensation or standing hair experience, it is to be taken as a premonition of impending threat of lightning. In such a situation, quickly acquire the lowest profile by crouching down the balls of your feet but never make a mistake to lie flat on the ground.
5. Lightning can affect a building in three ways (a) direct hit (b) through external wires and pipes, and (c) through the ground. Lightning can also travel through reinforcement in concrete walls, flooring etc. Beware.
6. Do not use wired phones. Mobile phones are the safest to use.
7. Lightning can strike through external doors and windows. The porch may not also be safe.
8. Unplug all the electrical and electronic equipment as soon as the thunder and lightning seem likely. Do not forget to disconnect radios and TVs from external antennas.
9. Avoid contact with all sorts of pipes and avoid taking a shower during thundering and lightning.
10. Monitor thunder storms and lightning from indoors. You should go out only after ensuring lull for atleast 30 minutes since the last thunder.
11. No rain does not mean no danger of lightning. Lightning may occur as far as 15 Km from the nearest rainfall area. Be alert.

12. Do not be under the mis-impression that the rubber shoes you wear and the rubber tyres of your car will protect you from lightning.
13. If someone is struck by lightning, at once come to his or her rescue. It is a very wrong notion that those struck by lightning carry an electrical charge.
14. A lightning protection system or no lightning protection system, a lightning can always strike. A lightning protection system, however, ensures a low resistance path for discharge of lightning energy. Good systems of protection carry lightning charge through lightning rods and cables from the building to the ground, and dissipate the charge. Ensure that the building is well protected.
15. If any part of a building is hit by lightning, call fire department immediately. Check whether anybody is hurt.
16. The immediate cause of death due to lightning in most cases cardiac arrest. It is important therefore to check whether the victim is still breathing and has a pulse. Act accordingly.
17. Loss of memory, dizziness, fatigue, chronic headache or difficulty in sleeping could be the consequences of any sad lightning experience.

Source: Centre for Disaster Mitigation and Management, VIT University,
Vellore, Tamil Nadu, India