

SUNY Cortland-Environmental Health and Safety Office

Lightning and Thunder

Inception Date: October 22, 2008

Latest Revision/Review Date: August 2, 2018

Previous Revision/Review Date: June 29, 2017

Guidelines for Lightning and Thunder

Contents

- I. Introduction**
- II. Safety Guidelines**

I. Introduction

The guidelines outlined in this safety standard should be observed for work and situations outdoors. These guidelines are based on information from the National Weather Service and the National Severe Storms Laboratory.

II. Safety Guidelines

1. Seek shelter immediately if lightning or thunder can be seen or heard. Lightning can strike 20 miles ahead of the parent cloud; therefore, you are within striking distance if you can see lightning or hear thunder. Additionally, in the event that someone is not aware of an approaching storm involving lightning or thunder, issue appropriate warnings.
2. Safe shelter includes buildings or concrete structures. If a safe shelter is inaccessible, seek refuge in a metal-roofed car, close the windows, and stay away from metal. Refuge under a tree or in open metal structures such as bleachers or dugouts is not sufficient. Additionally, stay away from tall objects and water.
3. If you are outside and feel your hair stand on end or your skin tingle, this is a potential forewarning of lightning or thunder. If you feel these sensations, immediately assume a crouched position, place your arms on your legs and your hands over your ears, and then lower your head. Remember not to lie flat. Once this sensation has passed, seek shelter immediately.
4. When lightning or thunder occurs, allow 30 minutes to pass after the last lightning strike or sound of thunder before resuming outdoor tasks.
 - a. To ensure that everyone is adequately protected, supervisors and employees should enforce these guidelines whenever it is necessary.
5. If a person is struck by lightning, immediately call 911. If you have appropriate training, be prepared to assist the victim until help arrives. Since a person who has been struck by lightning does not carry a charge, it is safe to administer rescue breathing or CPR.