Nearly 1,800 thunderstorms are occurring at any moment around the world. That’s over 16 million a year! All thunderstorms produce lightning, and outdoors is the most dangerous place to be during a storm. Each year in the United States, an average of 400 people are struck by lightning while working or playing outside — 100 of these people die while many of the others are left with permanent disabilities. Learn how to protect yourself and your loved ones from lightning.

Outdoor Lightning Safety Tips

When a thunderstorm approaches...

- If you hear thunder, head to safety! Go inside a building or vehicle and close the windows. Once inside, stay away from water, plumbing, and anything connected to power, phone, and cable lines.
- If you can’t find shelter, stay low. Lightning hits the tallest object. Avoid standing under tall trees, and don’t stand under a lone tree. Stay away from open areas such as golf courses and sports fields and open structures such as picnic shelters.
- If you’re caught in the open, squat down with your hands over your ears in the lowest place you can find. Do not lie down.
- Stay away from water. It conducts electricity. Metal conducts electricity, too. So stay off bikes, avoid leaning against cars, and let go of metal objects you might be carrying — golf clubs, fishing rods, tennis rackets, tools, etc.

Did You Know?

Learn the 30-30 Rule!

30 SECONDS: Count the seconds between seeing the lightning and hearing the thunder. If the time is 30 seconds or less, then the lightning is close enough to be a threat. Seek shelter immediately.

30 MINUTES: After seeing the last lightning flash, wait 30 minutes before leaving shelter. More than half of all lightning deaths occur after the thunderstorm has passed.

Learn more about lightning safety at these Web sites:
www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov  www.fema.gov/hazards/thunderstorms/

MYTH: If it is not raining, then there is no danger from lightning.
FACT: Lightning often strikes outside of heavy rain and may occur as far as 10 miles away from any rainfall.

MYTH: The rubber soles of shoes or rubber tires on a car will protect you from being struck by lightning.
FACT: Rubber-soled shoes and rubber tires provide NO protection from lightning. The steel frame of a hard-topped vehicle provides increased protection if you are not touching metal.

MYTH: People struck by lightning carry an electrical charge and should not be touched.
FACT: Victims of a lightning strike carry no electrical charge and should be attended to immediately. Apply first aid procedures if you are qualified to do so. Call 911 or send for help immediately.

MYTH: Lightning never strikes the same place twice.
FACT: Lightning will strike several times in the same place in the course of one discharge.