



June 2011 Newsletter

## Lightning

### **What You Need to Know:**

There are about 25 million lightning flashes in the United States each year. Lightning kills over 50 people each year and injures hundreds of others. Many injuries are serious and lifelong. By knowing a few simple facts and taking action quickly, you can greatly reduce your chances of getting struck by lightning.

### **Watch for Developing Thunderstorms:**

Thunderstorms are most likely to develop on spring or summer days but can occur year round. As the sun heats the air, pockets of warmer air start to rise and cumulus clouds form. Continued heating can cause these clouds to grow vertically into towering cumulus clouds, often the first sign of a developing thunderstorm.

### **Seek Safe Shelter:**

Lightning can strike as far as 10 miles from the area where it is raining. That's about the distance you can hear thunder. If you can hear thunder, you are within striking distance. Seek safe shelter immediately.

### **Keep Safe Indoors:**

When you're inside buildings, stay off corded phones, computers and other electrical equipment that put you in direct contact with electricity. Stay away from pools (indoor or outdoor), tubs, showers and other plumbing. Buy surge suppressors for key equipment. Install ground fault protectors on circuits near water or outdoors.

### **Reduce Outdoor Risks:**

Most lightning deaths and injuries occur in the summer. Where organized outdoor sports activities take place; coaches, camp counselors and other adults must take precautions at the first sound of thunder and should have a written plan that all staff are aware of and enforce.

### **Help a Lightning Strike Victim:**

Lightning victims do not carry an electrical charge, they are safe to touch, and need urgent medical attention. Cardiac arrest is the immediate cause of death for those who die. Some deaths can be prevented if the victim receives the proper first aid immediately.