



## BEFORE LIGHTNING STRIKES

### When Lightning Strikes

#### Transcript

Before lightning strikes — protect yourself!

Why? Because lightning can hit anyone who's in the wrong place at the wrong time.

So what is lightning?

Lightning is the buildup and release of electrical energy.

One ground lightning strike can generate 100 million volts of electricity.

This electric bolt from the sky then heats the surrounding air to 50,000 degrees Fahrenheit, creating the intense sound waves that we hear as thunder.

So where does lightning strike?

When this lightning bolt reaches the ground, it most likely will hit tall things, metal things, or water, or an unsuspecting person standing on open ground or on a roof.

And the results? If someone is hit by lightning, it can cause burns, nervous system damage, and other health problems.

And, lightning can stop the heart!

So before lightning strikes, protect yourself! Here's what you can do.

When you see an approaching storm:

- Avoid the high ground.
- Avoid metal objects.
- Avoid solitary trees.
- Avoid water.



And then...seek shelter in a building.

- If you can't get to a building, seek safety inside a car or truck without touching the metal inside.
- If shelter is not nearby, seek a cluster of small trees or bushes or seek lower elevations.

And if you can't get to a shelter and are caught outside, use the lightning crouch.

- Put your feet together, squat down, tuck your head, and cover your ears.
- When the immediate threat of lightning has passed, continue heading to the safest place possible.

And finally...use the 30-30 Rule.

- You can tell how close you are to a lightning strike by counting the seconds between seeing the flash and hearing the thunder. For every five seconds you count, the lightning is one mile away.
- When you first see lightning, count 30 seconds. If the time between when you see the flash and hear the thunder is 30 seconds or less, the lightning is close enough to hit you. Seek shelter immediately. (If you can't see the lightning, just hearing the thunder means lightning is likely within striking range.)
- Then, after the last flash of lightning, wait 30 minutes before leaving your shelter. More than 50% of all lightning deaths occur after a thunderstorm has passed.

This is the best protection — to be ready — before lightning strikes.

#### More Resources:

National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) – [www.cdc.gov/niosh/stresswk.html](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/stresswk.html)  
American Institute of Stress – [www.stress.org/job.htm](http://www.stress.org/job.htm)