



SHELTER FROM THUNDER & LIGHTNING STORMS

SAFE SHELTER FROM STORMS: A house or other substantial building offers the best protection from lightning. For a shelter to provide adequate protection from lightning, it must contain a mechanism for conducting the electrical current from the point of contact to the ground. These mechanisms may be on the outside of the structure, or contained within the walls of the structure, or a combination of the two. On the outside, lightning can travel along the outer shell of the building or follow metal gutters and downspouts to the ground. Inside, lightning can follow conductors such as electrical wiring, plumbing and telephone lines to the ground.

UNSAFE SHELTERING: Unless specifically designed to be lightning safe, small structures do little, if anything to protect people from lightning. Many small, open shelters on golf courses, parks and athletic fields are designed to protect people from rain and sun, but not lightning. A shelter that does not contain plumbing or wiring throughout, or some other mechanism for grounding from the roof to the ground is not safe. Small wooden, vinyl or metal sheds offer little or no protection from lightning and should be avoided during thunderstorms.

STAY SAFE WHILE INSIDE: Corded telephone use is the leading cause of indoor lightning injuries in the United States. Lightning can travel long distances on phone and electrical wires, particularly in rural areas. If you must use a phone during a storm, a cellular phone is safest. Stay away from windows and doors, as these can provide the path for a direct strike. Basements are generally safe places to go during thunderstorms, but avoid contact with concrete walls that may contain metal reinforcing bars. Also, avoid washers and dryers because they have contacts with plumbing and electrical systems and contain an electrical path to the outside through the dryer vent.

PROTECT YOUR PETS: Outside dog houses are not lightning-safe. Dogs that are chained to trees or wire runners can easily fall victim to lightning strikes. You may want to consider bringing your pets inside the home or garage during thunderstorms.

PROTECT PERSONAL PROPERTY: Lightning generates electrical surges that can damage electronic equipment some distance from the actual strike. Typical surge protectors WILL NOT protect equipment from a lightning strike. Before a thunderstorm threatens, unplug any unnecessary appliances and electronic equipment from conductors.

For additional information, visit the National Weather Service Web at www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov

