

Protection From Lightning Strikes

Editor's note: Our Tailgate Training Tip Sheets are [available in Spanish at www.gemplers.com](http://www.gemplers.com).

KEY POINTS:

- Know that lightning can strike even if the sky above you is clear.
- Know that open tractors without enclosed cabs are NOT safe during a lightning strike.

Note to trainer: Follow this script or use it to help guide you through a 10- to 15-minute tailgate training session for your ag/hort workers. You may photocopy this sheet for your employees' personal use. However, it may not be published or sold. Two good resources on lightning safety are the National Lightning Safety Institute at www.lightningsafety.com and the National Ag Safety Database (Click on "lightning" under "locate by topic") at www.cdc.gov/nasd

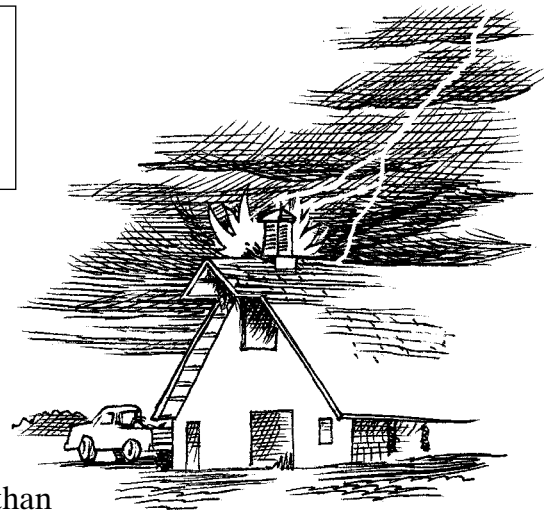
The dangers of lightning

- Each year, lightning kills more people in the United States than hurricanes or tornadoes.
- Although an estimated 90 percent of the people who are struck by lightning do survive, many of them suffer from severe health problems the rest of their lives.
- People who have been struck by lightning sometimes have trouble processing information, may be easily distracted, and may no longer be able to perform their jobs.
- Lightning also results in billions of dollars in economic losses each year.
- In agriculture, it is a major cause of wildfires, as well as fires in barns, livestock buildings, and other structures.
- Lightning is also a serious threat to greenhouses because the plastic used in many greenhouse structures is highly toxic when it burns.

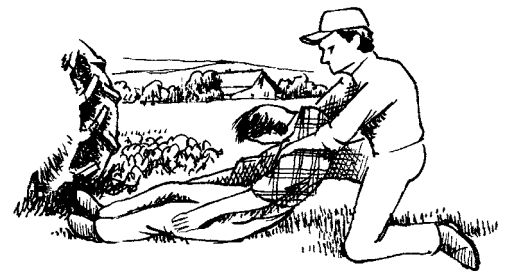
When lightning is likely to strike

- Most of the reported injuries from lightning occur during the summer months. Also, lightning most often strikes in the afternoon – between noon and 6 p.m.
- Yet, it may strike at any time, including when thunderstorms are in the area but the sky above you is clear.
- You're in danger of being struck by lightning if you can see the lightning or if you can hear thunder. Louder or more frequent thunder indicates that lightning is approaching.
- In these cases, it's important that you follow your supervisor's instructions for taking shelter. Also, know that your risk of being struck by lightning continues for 30 minutes from the time you saw it or you heard the thunder.

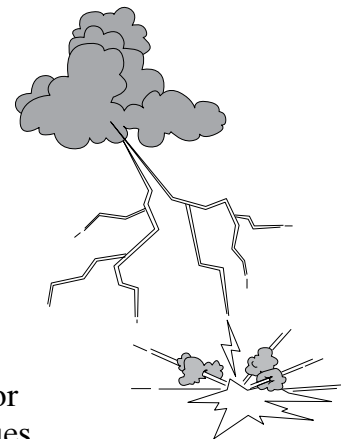
Note to trainer: Review with trainees specific locations where they can take shelter in case of a lightning strike.



Lightning is a major cause of fires in agricultural buildings.



Many who are struck by lightning suffer from severe health problems the rest of their lives.



Lightning can strike at anytime.

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See our [full line of safety supplies](#), including respirators, eye and ear protection, coveralls, first aid and more.

Protection From Lightning Strikes

Lightning safety tips

- Certain vehicles and equipment are **unsafe** when there is a threat of lightning. These include: riding mowers, tractors without enclosed cabs, utility wagons, and golf carts. Get out and seek safe shelter if lightning threatens.
- If you are operating heavy equipment with an enclosed ROPS canopy – such as a backhoe, loader, grader, or scraper – shut off the equipment, close the doors, and sit with your hands in your lap until the threat of lightning is over. Do **not** abandon the equipment and step on the ground.
- If you are in a car, don't touch the steering wheel, radio, gear shift, CB or radio. Stop the car, roll up the windows, and stay away from the door.
- Avoid standing on a hilltop or under an isolated tall tree. If you are surrounded by woods, seek shelter under a thick grove of small trees.
- If you are in a boat or are swimming, come ashore.
- If you are caught in an open field and think lightning is about to strike, crouch down as close to the ground as possible. Put your hands on your knees, and your head between your knees. Don't put your hands on the ground. It's best if you can do this in a ravine, valley, or other depression.



Don't stand under an isolated tall tree.

More important tips

- Avoid contact with all metal if lightning is about to strike.
- Do not seek shelter in open-sided structures.
- Know that the best place to seek shelter is in an inner room in a large, permanently constructed building. Once you are inside, stay away from water and from open windows and doors. Stay off the telephone, and don't use electrical appliances or tools.
- Don't be afraid to touch someone who has been struck by lightning in order to administer first aid. If the person isn't breathing and you have been trained in CPR, administer CPR. Seek immediate emergency medical help.



Try to seek shelter in a large, permanently constructed building.

Are there any questions?

*Note to trainer: Take time to answer trainees' questions. Then review the **Lightning Protection Do's and Don'ts**.*

LIGHTNING PROTECTION DO'S AND DON'TS

DO:

- Seek safe shelter when lightning is about to strike.
- Stay away from water, metal objects, and electrical appliances.
- Immediately get out of a greenhouse if it is struck by lightning or starts to burn.

DON'T:

- Think that rubber tires or a foam pad will protect you from lightning.
- Seek shelter in open-sided structures.
- Hesitate to help a co-worker who has been struck by lightning for fear you will be electrocuted.

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