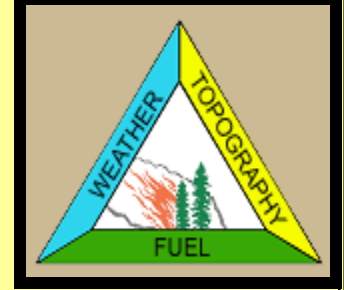




TOPIC 60 LIGHTNING



The most dangerous period for thunderstorms with cloud-to-ground lightning is from March through August. The mature stage of the storm can be marked on the ground by a sudden reversal of wind direction, a noticeable rise in wind speed, and a sharp drop in temperature. Heavy rain, hail and lightning occur only in the mature stage of a thunderstorm. Keep informed; know what the storm is doing.

During a thunderstorm:

1. Do not use radios, telephones, plug-in electrical equipment or plumbing fixtures.
2. Turn off generators and electrical equipment.
3. Put down all tools.
4. Do not handle flammable materials in open containers.
5. Stay in your vehicle unless it is metal-tracked, has non-metal top, or is open.
6. If you are on a metal-tracked vehicle, dismount and seek appropriate shelter. Get away from water tanks, ponds, streams, lakes, and swimming pools. Avoid parking lots, tennis courts, athletic fields and golf courses.
7. Get under a steel bridge, but never touch the steel and never sit or stand on damp ground.
8. If boats are in use, have them docked. Get out of boats and away from the water.
9. Ground and anchor all aircraft.
10. Take shelter in a building, if one is available. Choose a building with lightning protection in preference to a small, unprotected building. Close the doors and windows, if possible. If that is not possible, stay away from open doors and windows, and areas on top of buildings. Stay away from fireplaces, radiators, stoves, metal pipes, and sinks.
11. If no buildings are available, your best protection is a cave, ditch, tunnel, canyon, or head-high clumps or trees in open forest area.
12. When there is no shelter, avoid tall objects such as lone trees. If only isolated trees are nearby or if you are in open country, the best protection is to make yourself as small a target as possible. Drop to your knees, bend forward with your hands resting on your knees and keep a distance of twice the height of the nearest tree between you and the tree. To minimize the flow of the current, keep your feet together. Keep away from wire fences, telephone lines, electrically conductive objects, and railroad tracks.
13. Avoid the tops of ridges, hilltops, wide open spaces, ledges, out crops of trucks, and sheds or shelters in exposed locations. Avoid grouping people together.
14. Move away from the horses and stock.
15. Advise crewmembers that if they do feel an electrical charge, if their hair stands on end, or their skin tingles, a lightning strike may be imminent.

Persons struck by lightning may receive a severe electrical shock and burns, including entry and exit wounds. These individuals carry no electrical charge after exposure to lightning and can be touched safely. Victims of an electrical strike may suffer respiratory and/or cardiac arrest. Therefore, administer CPR immediately if needed and first aid, as required. **Note: an individual in respiratory or cardiac arrest is a medical emergency and must be transported to an advanced life-support medical facility as quickly as possible.**