

Lightning Can Strike Twice!

According to the UK Met Office, there are some 2,000 thunderstorms globally at any one time, producing about 100 lightning strikes to Earth per second. Lightning very rarely makes front page news, yet, each year, around the world an estimated 100,000 people are injured and 10,000 people are killed by lightning — more than are killed by floods, hurricanes or tornadoes.

Outdoors is the most dangerous place to be during a lightning storm. Because lightning can travel sideways for up to 10 miles, blue skies are not a sign of safety. If you hear thunder, its time to take cover. The U.S Lightning Protection Institute (LPI) recommend following these guidelines to stay safe during electrical storms:

- If outdoors, go inside. Look for a shelter equipped with a lightning protection system.
- Go to a low point. Lightning hits the tallest object. Get down if you are in an exposed area.
- Stay away from trees.
- Avoid metal. Don't hold metal items, including bats, golf clubs, fishing rods, tennis rackets or tools. Avoid clotheslines, poles and fences.
- If you feel a tingling sensation or your hair stands on end, lightning may be about to strike. Crouch down and cover your ears.
- Stay away from water. This includes pools, lakes, puddles and anything damp, such as wet poles or grass.
- Don't stand close to other people. Spread out.
- Once indoors, stay away from windows and doors.
- Do not use corded telephones except for emergencies.
- Unplug electronic equipment before the storm arrives and avoid contact with electrical equipment or cords during storms.
- Avoid contact with plumbing, including sinks, baths and taps. Do not take baths and showers during electrical storms.
- Don't forget pets during thunderstorms. Doghouses are not lightning-safe! Dogs that are chained can easily fall victim to a lightning strike.

