

Lightning Safety

When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors

From 2005-2014, Colorado had the third-most lightning-strike fatalities of any state, with 17. Another 15 were injured, according to the National Weather Service. Recognizing the danger of lightning early and getting to a safe location are the best ways to protect yourself or your family.

When you can hear thunder, lightning is close enough to be dangerous. When lightning is within six miles, or by the time the flash-to-bang time is 30 seconds, you should seek shelter.

- Head immediately inside to a substantial building but stay away from corded telephones, electrical appliances, and plumbing. While a picnic shelter might keep you dry from rain, it will not provide adequate protection from lightning.
- The second safest place is a vehicle with a metal roof and metal sides.
- If you are caught outside, stay away from open areas, high ground and water. Never stand under a tall, isolated tree.



The Highlands Ranch Metro District has developed lightning guidelines for our recreation game officials and coaches. These include suspending games or practices when lightning is within six miles and waiting for 30 minutes after the last sound of thunder to resume play.

Lightning's behavior is random and unpredictable. Preparedness and quick response are the best defenses.

Lightning Myths and Facts

Myth: If trapped outside and lightning is about to strike, you should lie flat on the ground.

Fact: Lying flat increases your chance of being affected by potentially deadly ground current. If you are caught outside in a thunderstorm, you should keep moving toward a safe shelter.

Myth: If thunderstorms threaten while you are outside playing a game, it is okay to finish it before seeking shelter.

Fact: Many lightning casualties occur because people do not seek shelter soon enough. No game is worth death or life-long injuries. Seek proper shelter immediately if you hear thunder. Adults are responsible for the safety of children.

Myth: If it's not raining or there aren't clouds overhead, you're safe from lightning.

Fact: Lightning often strikes more than three miles from the center of the thunderstorm, far outside the rain or thunderstorm cloud.

Myth: Lightning never strikes the same place twice.

Fact: Lightning often strikes the same place repeatedly, especially if it's a tall, pointy, isolated object.

Myth: Rubber tires on a car protect you from lightning by insulating you from the ground.

Fact: Most cars are safe from lightning, but it is the metal roof and metal sides that protect you, *not* the rubber tires. Remember, convertibles, motorcycles, bicycles, open-shelled outdoor recreational vehicles and cars with fiberglass shells offer no protection from lightning. When lightning strikes a vehicle, it goes through the metal frame into the ground. Don't lean on doors during a thunderstorm.

Source: National Weather Service