



MAFES Dawg Tracks

August 13, 2012



Safety Tips: Protection from Lightning



In the past, we looked at lightning and storms coming only in certain times of the year. Now, we never know when to plan or anticipate inclement weather with bolts of lightning. So, it behooves us to be prepared at any time for lightning and thunderstorms, which brings us to the subject of this week's newsletter.

Lightning is a major cause of fires in agricultural buildings. **It can strike at any time!** Records show that many folks who have been struck by lightning can suffer severe health problems for the rest of their lives.

THE DANGERS OF LIGHTNING-

- Each year, lightning kills more people in the U.S.A. than hurricanes or tornadoes.
- Although an estimated 90% of the people who are struck by lightning do survive, many of them suffer severe health problems for the rest of their lives.
- Some folks who have been struck by lightning have problems 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 greenhouses 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 afternoons - between noon and 6:00 pm.
- ✓ 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 the 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.

LIGHTNING SAFETY TIPS-

- Certain vehicles and equipment are **unsafe** when there is threat of lightning. These include: riding mowers, tractors without enclosed cabs, utility wagons, and golf carts. Get out and seek 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 engine, 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, do not 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.

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 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 on CPR, administer CPR. Seek immediate emergency medical help.

DO'S & DON'TS OF LIGHTNING PROTECTION

DO:

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

DON'T:

- Think that rubber tires or foam pads 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 that you will be electrocuted.

**THERE HE LIES 6 FEET
UNDER- DIDN'T
HEED THE ROARING
THUNDER
~~ALERT TODAY
ALIVE TOMORROW~~**

