



# Are you Prepared?

## *Learn the Steps to Protect Your Workers from Lightning*

Storm hazards are also occupational hazards. The keys to protecting your workers are planning and preparation. PMA Companies shares how to help keep your workers safe from lightning.

### **Lightning - Workplace Hazard**

Lightning is often overlooked as a workplace hazard. According to the National Weather Service, there were 19 lightning fatalities in 2022. Among the key hazards with lightning storms are victims caught outside during a storm or going back outside too soon after a storm has passed.

### **Start by Developing a Lightning Safety Plan**

#### **Assess Your Hazards**

Do you manage lifeguards, sporting events, playgrounds, farms? Who could be injured? Where are workers at certain times of day? At minimum, your plan should include the following steps:

- 1. Designate a responsible person** to monitor forecasted weather, observe precursors, and initiate evacuations when appropriate.
- 2. Be weather aware!** Inform supervisors and workers to act quickly after hearing thunder, seeing lightning, or perceiving other warning signs of approaching thunderstorms.
- 3. Indicate how you will notify workers** about lightning safety warnings (e.g., text messages, loudspeakers, app).
- 4. Identify Safe Shelter requirements**, including expected response times for workers to shelter.
- 5. Specify approaches** for determining when to suspend outdoor work and when to resume.
- 6. Account for the time required to evacuate** customers and the public, and time needed for workers to reach safety.



#### **Create Awareness**

Educate employees, managers, facility maintenance, etc., on the importance of pre-planning and weather awareness. No place is safe outside when thunderstorms are in the area. Ensure your workers understand the following:

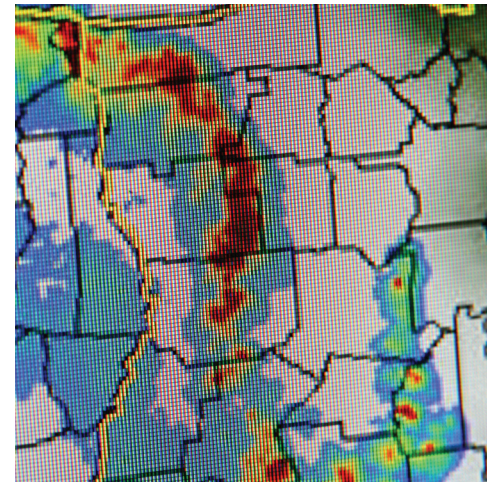
- If you hear thunder, lightning is close enough to strike you.
- When you hear thunder, immediately move to a safe shelter, such as:
  - A substantial building with electricity or plumbing
  - An enclosed metal topped vehicle with windows up
- Once you are indoors, do the following:
  - Stay off corded phones, computers, and other electrical equipment that you put in direct contact with electricity
  - Avoid plumbing, including sinks, baths, and faucets
  - Stay away from windows and doors and stay off porches
  - Do not lie on concrete floors and do not lean against concrete walls, as they may have metal reinforcements
- Stay in the safe shelter at least 30 minutes after you hear the last sound of thunder



### Next Steps

Resources to help keep your workers safe with education and training:

- View the PMA Organizational Safety Institute webinar, *Improve Lightning Hazard Awareness for Employees and Your Business*, in **PMA Websource®**
- Review **Lightning Safety When Working Outdoors**
- Customize a plan for your specific risks, with **lightning safety tool kits**, for example
- Contact your local **National Weather Service** for training resources



If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact your local PMA Risk Control Consultant or reach out to us at [heretohelp@pmagroup.com](mailto:heretohelp@pmagroup.com).

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