

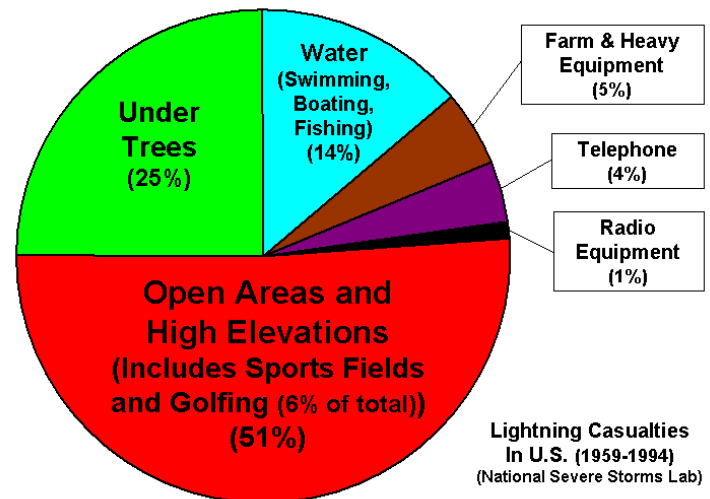


WHERE COMMUNITY AND SPIRIT MEET™

JUNE 20-26 IS LIGHTNING SAFETY AWARENESS WEEK

It may seem like a hassle when the lifeguard at Kirkwood Pool tells you to get out of the water because thunder has been heard, but the scary truth is that water is a deadly place to be when lightning strikes (see chart). July is the deadliest month for lightning strikes, followed closely by June and August. Here are a few things to keep in mind when trying to avoid being struck by lightning [Source: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration – www.noaa.gov]:

- Each year in the U.S., there are about 25 million cloud-to-ground lightning strikes
- Lightning kills an average of 73 people per year in the United States. This is more than the 68 that are killed by tornadoes or the 16 killed by hurricanes (on average). Lightning injures about 300 people a year.
- Lightning is the #2 killer during severe weather (flooding is #1).
- Because lightning only claims one or two victims at a time, and because it does not cause the mass destruction left in the wake of hurricanes or tornadoes, lightning generally receives much less attention than the more destructive storm-related killers.
- Lack of understanding with regard to the dangers of lightning continues to be a significant problem. Many people do not act to protect their lives, their property or the lives of others in a timely manner simply because they do not understand all the dangers associated with thunderstorms and lightning.
- A lot of people think if it is sunny or if there are just a few clouds around and you hear thunder, it is ok to stay outside until you actually see the lightning. That is FALSE. If you hear thunder when you are outside, that means that lightning is close enough to strike you.
- The best thing to do if you are outside and you hear thunder is to head indoors immediately. If you cannot get to shelter like a building or your vehicle, then find the lowest elevated area. You want to be the smallest thing outside.



Most Importantly:

- Never stand under a tree and stay away from bodies of water.
- Lightning can strike up to 10 miles away from the rain area. Go inside quickly – into a completely enclosed building *before* the storm arrives. Do not go to a

carport, open garage, or covered patio. If you can't make it inside, a hard-topped, all-metal vehicle will provide protection.

- Whatever you do, **DO NOT SEEK SHELTER UNDER A TREE.** Stay away from all trees. Try to be the smallest, shortest object if you are caught outside – and stay as far away from trees and tall poles as possible.
- Get out of the water, off the beach, and out of small boats or canoes. Avoid standing in puddles of water even if wearing rubber boots.
- Do not use metal objects, such as golf clubs, metal bats, fishing rods, or metal tools.
- Lightning can hurt you even if you are inside. Never use a corded phone or take a shower/bath during a storm. Lightning can strike your home and travel through the phone wire or water pipes and you may get seriously hurt.
- *Helping a Lightning Strike Victim:* Lightning victims do not carry an electrical charge, are safe to touch, and need urgent medical attention. Cardiac arrest is the immediate cause of death for those who die. Some deaths can be prevented if the victim receives the proper first aid immediately. Call 9-1-1 immediately and perform CPR if the person is unresponsive or not breathing. Use an Automatic External Defibrillator if available.