

Lightning Safety

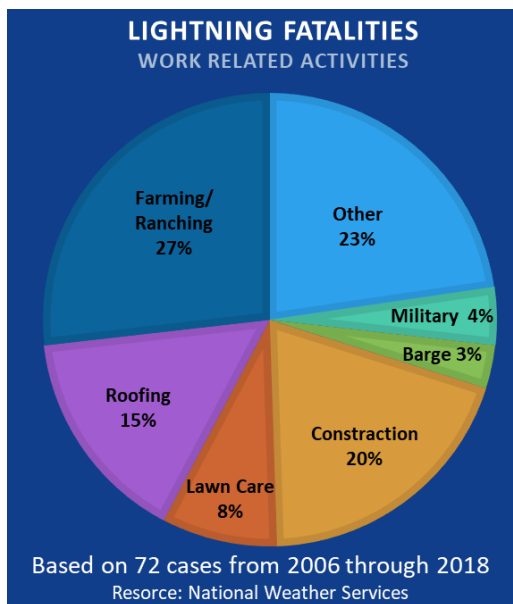
Lightning strikes can severely injure or kill workers whose jobs involve working outdoors. Lightning is often overlooked as an occupational hazard, but employers need to be aware about lightning hazards to ensure their workers' safety.

Some workers are at greater risk than others. Workers whose jobs involve working outdoors in open spaces, on or near tall objects, or near explosives or conductive materials (e.g., metal) have significant exposure to lightning risks. Worker activities at higher risk for lightning hazards include:

- Logging
- Explosives handling or storage
- Heavy equipment operation
- Roofing
- Construction (e.g., scaffolding)
- Building maintenance
- Power utility field repair
- Steel erection/ telecommunications
- Farming and field labor
- Plumbing and pipe fitting
- Lawn services/landscaping
- Airport ground personnel operations
- Pool and beach lifeguarding



Photo: NOAA



When thunder roars, go indoors !

Assess your lightning risk and take appropriate actions. During thunderstorms, no place outside is safe. If you can hear thunder, lightning is close enough to strike. Stop what you are doing and seek safety in a substantial building or a hard-topped metal vehicle.

Know what objects and equipment to avoid during a thunderstorm;

- Stay off and away from anything tall or high, including rooftops, scaffolding, utility poles and ladders.
- Stay off and away from large equipment such as bulldozers, cranes, backhoes, track loaders and tractors.
- Do not touch materials or surfaces that can conduct electricity, including metal scaffolding, metal equipment, utility lines, water, water pipes and plumbing.
- Leave areas with explosives or munitions.

When thunderstorms threaten, don't start anything you can't quickly stop. Pay attention to the daily forecasts so you know what to expect during the day. Also pay attention to early signs of thunderstorms: high winds, dark clouds, rain, distant thunder or lightning. If these conditions exist, do not start a task you cannot quickly stop.

If a co-worker is struck by lightning. Lightning victims do not carry an electrical charge, are safe to touch, and need urgent medical attention. Call 9-1-1 and perform CPR if the person is unresponsive or not breathing. Use an Automatic External Defibrillator if one is available.