



**Lightning kills and injures more people than any other summer weather threat!**

In 2004, 90 Minnesotans lost buildings and belongings because of lightning fires. Sixty-two lightning fires took place in homes and business structures, resulting in damages of \$2.7 million.

Each year, lightning causes an estimated 17,400 fires in the U.S. Injuries and deaths per lightning fire are relatively small, but dollar loss per fire is nearly twice that from all U.S. fires. Roofs, sidewalls, framing and electrical wires are the areas most vulnerable to lightning fires.

Two-thirds of lightning fires occur from June–August.



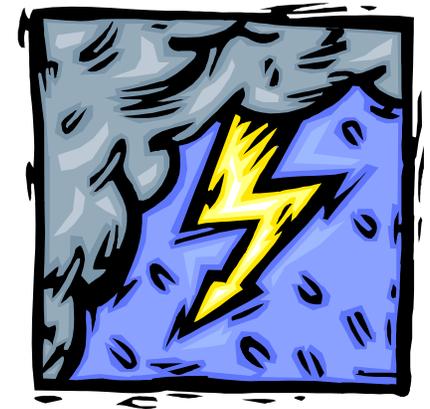
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# Lightning Fire Safety



# Lightning Strikes Fear

## WHAT EXACTLY IS LIGHTNING?



Lightning is a natural discharge of atmospheric electricity accompanied by a vivid flash of light. It commonly travels from one cloud to another, but sometimes from a cloud to the earth.

Lightning comes from a cumulonimbus (thunderhead) cloud. Thunderstorm clouds form wherever there is enough rapid upward air motion and moisture to produce a deep cloud. These conditions most often occur in summer; two-thirds of lightning fires take place in June, July, and August. Twenty-five percent of them occur in July.

Every thunderstorm produces lightning, and lightning kills about 100 Americans each year — more than tornadoes — and causes about 300 injuries. Most injuries occur in outdoor areas such as campgrounds, although many injuries happen in the home.

## Myths and facts

**Myth:** If it is not raining, there is no danger from lightning.

**Fact:** Lightning often strikes away from heavy rainfall. It may occur as far as ten miles away from any rain.

**Myth:** Rubber soles on shoes or rubber tires on a car will protect you from being injured by lightning.

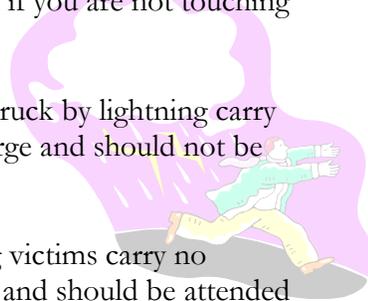
**Fact:** Rubber provides no protection from lightning. However, the steel frame of a hard-topped vehicle provides some protection if you are not touching metal.

**Myth:** People struck by lightning carry an electrical charge and should not be touched.

**Fact:** Lightning victims carry no electrical charge and should be attended to immediately.

**Myth:** Heat lightning occurs on very hot summer days and poses no threat.

**Fact:** What is referred to as “heat lightning” is actually lightning from a thunderstorm too far away for thunder to be heard. However, the storm may be moving in your direction.



## Strike back with prevention



Damage and fires caused by lightning can be prevented! A lightning-protection system in your home can prevent 99 percent of lightning damage and fires.

Lightning protection systems neither attract nor repel lightning strikes; they simply provide a safe path to earth for the lightning's electrical energy. An attic smoke alarm connected to your house alarms, or a heat detector in your attic, will increase your warning time and your opportunity to escape.

When thunder and lightning storms approach, seek shelter in a large building or enclosed metal vehicle. Avoid high ground, metal objects, water and open spaces. Once indoors, avoid wires that are in contact with the outdoors, such as those in telephones, computers and stereo headsets.

If you are in an open field, crouch down. Get close to the ground, but don't lie flat on the ground. Never seek shelter under a solitary object such as a tree, especially if it is the tallest structure in the area.

