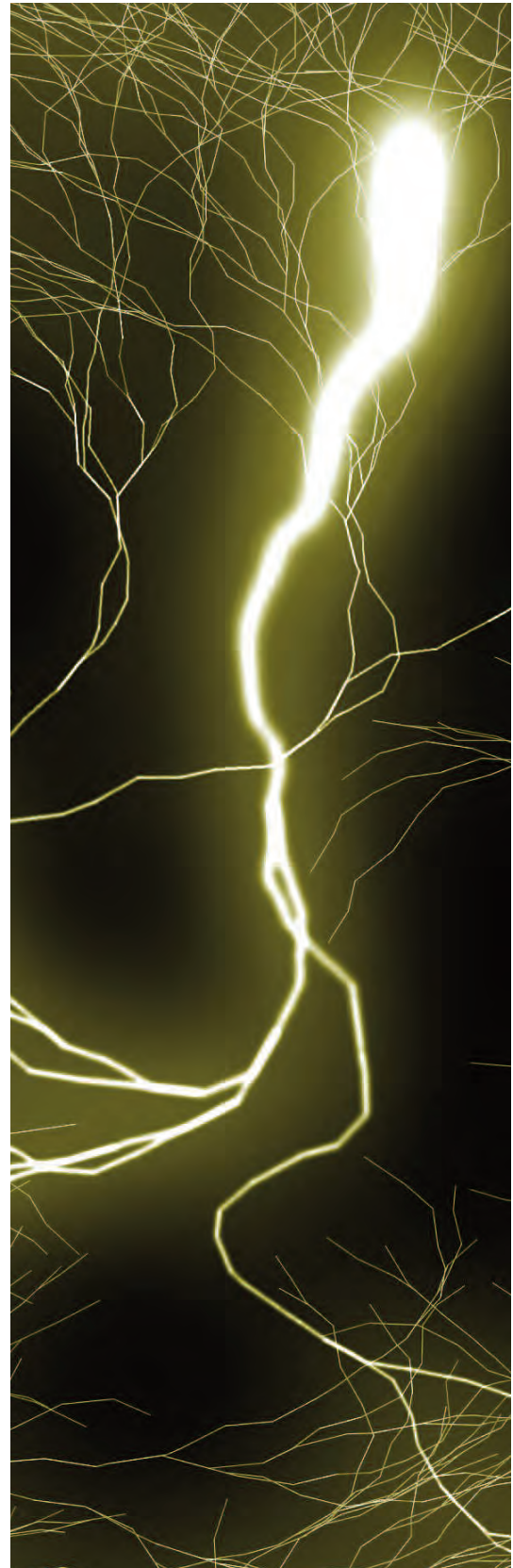


LIGHTNING - THE UNDERRATED KILLER

An estimated 25 million lightning flashes occur each year in the U.S. Over the past 30 years, lightning killed an average of 62 people per year, tying the average of 62 deaths per year caused by tornadoes. Yet because lightning usually claims only one or two victims at a time and does not cause mass destruction of property, it is underrated as a risk. While documented lightning injuries in the U.S. average about 300 per year, undocumented injuries are likely much higher.

- **Watch for Developing Thunderstorms.** Thunderstorms are most likely to develop on spring or summer days but can occur year round. As the sun heats the air, pockets of warmer air start to rise and cumulus clouds form. Continued heating can cause these clouds to grow vertically into cumulus towers, often the first sign of a developing thunderstorm.
- **An Approaching Thunderstorm: When to Seek Safe Shelter.** Lightning can strike as far as 10 miles from an area where it is raining. That's about the distance you can hear thunder. If you can hear thunder, you are within striking distance. Immediately seek safe shelter, defined as an enclosed building or car. It is not under a tree or building awning. (And contrary to folk wisdom, lightning can strike twice in the same place!)



- **Outdoor Activities: Minimize the Risk of Being Struck.** Most lightning deaths and injuries occur in the summer. At organized outdoor sporting activities, coaches, camp counselors and other adults must stop activities at the first roar of thunder to ensure everyone has time to get into a safe shelter. Leaders of outdoors events should have a written plan that all staff are aware of and enforce.
- **Indoor Activities: Things to Avoid.** Inside building, stay off corded phones, computers and other electrical equipment that put you in direct contact with electricity. Stay away from pools (indoor or outdoor), tubs, showers and other plumbing. Buy surge suppressors for key equipment. Install ground fault protectors on circuits near water or outdoors. When inside, wait 30 minutes after the last strike before going out again.
- **Helping a Lightning Strike Victim.** If a person is struck by lightning, call 911 and get medical care immediately. Cardiac arrest and irregularities, burns and nerve damage are common when people are struck by lightning. However, with proper treatment, including CPR if necessary, most victims survive. You are in no danger helping a lightning victim. The charge will not affect you.

Lightning is dangerous. With common sense, you can greatly increase your safety. At the first clap of thunder, go to a large building or fully enclosed vehicle; wait 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder to go back outside.

<http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov/overview.htm>

NOAA, National Weather Service
Office of Climate, Water, and Weather Services
1325 East West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910

CONTACT

For additional information, please contact:

Bob Lombard

Senior Vice President & Regional Director
Willis Pooling Practice
1755 E. Plumb Lane, Suite #269
Reno, NV 89502
775 323 1656 Ext. 19 (Office)
775 858 6335 (Cell)
lombard_bj@willis.com

David F. Brawner

Assistant Vice President & Senior Risk Control Consultant
Willis Pooling Practice
26 Century Boulevard
Nashville, TN 37214
615 872 3536 (Office)
615 587 1908 (Cell)
dave.brawner@willis.com