

# Lightning And Electrical Safety

(NAPSA)—Electricity can either be generated by humans or by nature. It is a powerful force of energy that causes serious injuries and deaths each year. Electrical injuries average about 3,000 annually in the United States. About 40 percent of all victims die as a result of their injuries. Lightning strikes account for about 25 percent of all electrical injuries.

“Injury caused by electricity may include burns to the skin and deeper tissues, cardiac rhythm disturbances and associated injuries from falls and other trauma,” said Pam Ross, MD, of the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP). “However, most injuries from lightning and electricity could be prevented by taking all of the necessary precautions.”

## Preventing Lightning Injuries And Deaths

- The best way to protect yourself is to stay indoors during thunderstorms.
- Do not talk on the phone during storms either. Stay away from metal objects like faucets, wires, and pipes, which can conduct electricity and may attract lightning if it hits your house.
- Stay away from metal objects when outside of your house especially. A fence or railroad track is a dangerous thing to be near during lightning.
- If shelter is not available, get into a car that has a metal roof. If lightning strikes the car, the metal on the car will pass the electricity safely to the ground without harming you.
- Since lightning seeks the shortest traveling distance to the ground, keep away from trees, flagpoles, telephone poles and other objects that stand much taller than their surrounding area.
- Also keep in mind that if you are in an open field or on a golf course, YOU may be the tallest object in the surrounding area, so you should take shelter quickly.
- Do not swim during thunderstorms, and stay away from pools and lakes. Since water is a good conductor of electricity, it is dangerous.



- If you cannot find any kind of shelter, crouch with your head down and only your feet touching the ground; do not lie down because lightning can travel on the wet ground and shock you.

## Preventing Electrical Injuries And Deaths

- Routinely check your electrical appliances and wiring.
- Frayed wires can cause fires. Replace all worn, old, or damaged appliance cords immediately.
- Use electrical extension cords wisely. Don't overload them.
- Keep electrical appliances away from wet floors and counters; pay special care to electrical appliances in the bathroom and kitchen.
- When buying electrical appliances look for products that meet the UL standard for safety.
- Don't allow children to play with or around electrical appliances like space heaters, irons and hair dryers.
- Keep clothes, curtains and other potentially combustible items at least three feet from all heaters.
- Immediately shut off, and then professionally replace light switches that are hot to the touch and lights that flicker.
- Use safety closures to child-proof electrical outlets.
- Check your electrical tools regularly for signs of wear. If the cords are frayed or cracked, replace them. Replace any tool if it causes even small electrical shocks, overheats, shorts out or gives off smoke or sparks.

For more information on injury prevention visit ACEP online at [ACEP.org](http://ACEP.org).