

Protect Workers from Lightning this Summer



June 11-17, 2012 is Lightning Safety Week. During the summer, thunderstorms—and the lightning that comes with them—are common. And lightning poses a serious safety threat to workers, particularly those who work outside.

For example, on March 22, 2007, an early spring thunderstorm struck parts of central Ontario. Environment Canada had issued a rainfall warning and a caution about isolated thunderstorms for Parry Sound and the surrounding area. But two workers repairing the roof of a high school were struck by lightning and one died.

So it's important that you understand the hazards posed by lightning and how to protect workers from it.

According to Environment Canada, lightning flashes occur in Canada about 2.34 million times a year—including about **once every three seconds** during the summer months. And each year in Canada, lightning strikes:

- Kill up to 10 people
- Seriously injure up to 164 others
- Ignite some 4,000 forest fires.

Some interesting Canadian lightning facts:

- The month that's likely to have the most number of lightning flashes in Canada is July.
- The most frequent time of day for lightning is between 1 p.m. and 5 p.m.
- The region with the greatest annual number of days with lightning is inland of the north shore of Lake Erie near Highgate, Ontario.
- The city with the greatest number of days with lightning in any one year is Windsor, Ontario, which had 47 days of lightning.

The OHS Insider has lightning safety tips to help you keep workers safe. We also have a video from Environment Canada on lightning safety. And we have a handout you can adapt and give to all workers who may be exposed to lightning on the job.