

Spot The Safety Violation: Dos & Don'ts of Lightning Safety



What do you think would happen to a worker standing under this tree?



Thunderstorms are common during the summer. And according to Environment Canada, lightning kills about 10 Canadians every year and injures 100-150 others. So if your workers work outside, train them on how to stay safe in such storms.

For instance, although workers should take cover during a storm, they shouldn't do so under trees. As this picture shows, lightning is attracted to tall objects. And when lightning hits a tall object, it may travel partly down the object and then jump to a nearby victim. So standing under a tree may shield workers from the rain, but it exposes them to the hazard of lightning.

For example, a construction worker in Edmonton was recently injured when the tree he was standing under got hit by lightning, burning his arm.

DOS & DON'TS OF LIGHTNING SAFETY

Protect workers outside by using the [Canada Lightning Danger Map](#) from Environment Canada to see the areas at greatest risk of being struck by lightning in the next 10 minutes. And here are some dos and don'ts of lightning safety to pass on to your workers:

DO take shelter immediately, preferably in a building or all-metal automobile.

If you can hear thunder, you're within striking distance of lightning. Once in a safe location, stay there for 30 minutes after the last rumble of thunder is heard before going outside again.

DON'T put yourself above the surrounding landscape. Seek shelter in low-lying areas, such as valleys, ditches and depressions—but be aware of flooding.

DO stay away from water. So don't go boating if a storm threatens and get to land as quickly as possible if you're already out on the water. Lightning can strike the water and travel a substantial distance from its point of contact.

DON'T go near objects that conduct electricity, such as tractors, golf carts, golf clubs, metal fences, scaffolding and cranes.

DO stay away from tall objects, such as trees, poles, wires and fences. And avoid being the highest point in an open area. For example, holding an item such as an umbrella can make you the tallest object and thus a target for lightning.

DON'T park your vehicle under tall objects. Although you're safe inside a vehicle from a direct lightning strike, a tall object could get struck and fall onto the car or truck.

DO help someone who's been hit by lightning. People who've been struck by lightning don't carry an electrical charge and can safely be handled. And they should get medical attention immediately. Also, administer mouth-to-mouth or cardio-pulmonary resuscitation, if necessary.

For more information on protecting workers from lightning,

- A [video](#) from Environment Canada on lightning safety.