

Lightning Safety Week June 12-18 2017

When thunder roars, GO INDOORS!

As we head into summer, lightning awareness becomes ever more important. Environment and Climate Change Canada has information to help Canadians reduce their exposure to the risk. Many lightning injuries and deaths can be avoided by knowing when to take action and what to do. This year, Lighting Safety week will take the opportunity to debunk some lightning myths.

Contrary to popular belief, the majority of injuries and fatalities are not caused by a direct lightning strike but by ground current and side flash events. These effects can be seen on our video, "[Lightning Safety on the Soccer Field](#)" on the [Lightning in Canada website](#). The video also helps soccer players and outdoor sports enthusiasts learn how to stay safe when there is a threat of lightning near their location, by using the [Canadian Lightning Danger Map \(CLDM\)](#).

The CLDM displays high-risk lightning areas in red, with animation showing the movement of the storms. These maps are updated every 10 minute and are based on recent lightning observations. The CLDM can be found on [weather.gc.ca](#) and is accessible on mobile devices.

A second myth is that tree cover offers a safe place to shelter during a thunderstorm. The leaves of the tree may keep you dry for a short while but your chances of being struck by lightning increase dramatically as you could be struck by side flashes from the trunk, or ground current after the tree is struck. Twenty percent of lightning deaths occur from people sheltering under a tree or in an open gazebo. Sheltering under a tree is not safe!

Another wrongly held myth is that the rubber on the tires of a car or wearing rubber boots provides protection from lightning. In fact, it's the metal shell of a vehicle that provides a pathway for lightning to flow around and over the vehicle before entering the ground. This is known as a Faraday cage. Rubber boots will not protect you.

A final misconception is that there is no danger from lightning if it's not raining. This is not true. Statistics show that two-thirds of damaging lightning strikes occur when the storm is not directly above the victim – but is approaching or has just passed by. Current lightning research, which includes high speed photography, shows that the atmosphere around a thunderstorm becomes highly electrified. Lightning has been observed more than 40 kilometres from storm clouds. So when planning outdoor activities this summer, it is important to listen to weather forecasts, weather alerts, and to keep an eye on the sky as weather conditions can change quickly.

Please contact your regional Warning Preparedness Meteorologist if you have questions or need more information on Lightning Safety Week, the Canadian Lightning Danger Map or Lightning in Canada.

Remember the lightning safety rule: **When thunder roars, GO INDOORS!**

Warning Preparedness Meteorologist: **1-866-672-5463**

Lightning in Canada website: <http://www.ec.gc.ca/foudre-lightning>

Canadian Lightning Danger Map: http://weather.gc.ca/lightning/index_e.html