

WEATHER ALERT: Playing it safe with

LIGHTNING!

Lightning strikes the surface of the earth about 100 times every second. Each flash contains about one **billion** volts of electricity, enough energy to light a 100-watt bulb for three months. In the United States, an average of 67 people are killed each year by lightning. Many more are struck but survive with a variety of long-term, debilitating symptoms, including memory loss, attention deficits, sleep disorders, numbness, dizziness, stiffness in joints, irritability, fatigue, weakness, muscle spasms, depression, and an inability to sit for long.



Here are some tips to ensure you and your family have a safe summer:

DO NOT:



- **DO NOT** seek shelter under isolated trees or other tall, isolated objects. Lightning typically strikes the tallest object. That may be you in an open field or clearing.
- **DO NOT** place campsites in an open field on the top of a hill or on a ridge top. If you are camping in an open area, set up camp in a valley, ravine, or other low area. A tent offers NO protection from lightning.

- **Stay away from metal objects**, such as fences, poles and backpacks. Metal is an excellent conductor. The current from a lightning flash will easily travel for long distances.



DO:

- Seek shelter in an enclosed building, meaning one that is fully enclosed with a roof, walls and floor, such as a home, school, office building or a shopping center. Unsafe buildings include car ports, covered patios, picnic shelters, beach shacks/pavilions, golf shelters, camping tents, baseball dugouts and other partially open structures.
- If no permanent structure is available, seek shelter in a safe vehicle, including a hard-topped car, SUV, minivan, bus, tractor, etc. (soft-topped convertibles are not safe). If you seek shelter in your vehicle, make sure all doors are closed and windows rolled up. Do not touch any metal surfaces.



If lightning is in the immediate area, and there is no safe location nearby, get into the lightning desperation position. Crouch down but DO NOT lie down. Bend your knees down while keeping your feet together.

From the National Weather Service web site: www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov/outdoors.htm