

# Lightning Safety for U of U's Outdoor Workers

Lightning safety awareness is a priority at all outdoor activities and a lightning safety plan is the responsibility of each supervisor directing the activities of employees who work outdoors. No place outdoors is 100% safe from lightning. The important thing to remember is to **"Anticipate a high-risk situation and move to a low-risk location."**

1. **Detection.** Lightning conditions are to be monitored continuously. Resources for monitoring weather conditions can be found at the following:
  - Departments with employees who work outdoors are encouraged to get their own weather radio, monitor conditions and develop protocols for notifying employees of weather changes. Environmental Health and Safety can assist getting NOAA weather radios.
  - <http://www.met.utah.edu/wx/>. Meteorology maintains a current weather website.
  - **Environmental Health and Safety (801) 581-6590.** EHS monitors weather radio and maintains a real-time weather monitoring subscription service.
  - However, if thunder is heard, the danger is close enough to suspend operations and to seek refuge.
2. **Notification.** Suspension and resumption of work activities are planned in advance:
  - Yellow condition: 20-40 miles (30-60 km). *Threat may exist.*
  - Amber condition: 10-20 miles (16-30 km). *Threat is nearby*
  - Red alert: 0-10 miles (0-16 km). *No one is permitted outdoors.*
3. **Safe shelter.** Safe evacuation sites include:
  - Fully enclosed all-metal vehicles
  - Permanent, substantial buildings
  - Designated metal shelters especially designed
  - Other locations as identified by ES&H personnel

**Unsafe areas** during thunderstorms include proximity to all metal objects, such as power poles, fences and gates, light poles, metal machinery, electrical equipment, hauling machinery, and radio equipment. ***Avoid rooftops. Avoid water. Avoid all open areas.***

4. **Re-assess the threat.** Wait until thunder is no longer heard before resuming activities. Be extra cautious during this storm phase, as the lightning danger still may be a significant hazard.
5. Resume normal outdoor activities.
6. Policies & procedures. Education & training. At least annually, review Utah's lightning risks with workers and review your safety plans. June is Lightning Awareness Month.

People who have been struck by lightning do not carry an electrical charge and are safe to assist. Apply first aid immediately if you are qualified to do so. Get emergency help promptly. On campus, if you need an ambulance, contact University Police Dispatch at 801-585-2677.