



Lightning Safety

Keep an eye on the sky. At signs of an approaching storm...towering thunderheads, darkening skies, lightning, increased wind...tune in your portable or vehicle radio and listen for the latest weather information.

Lightning is one of South Dakota's deadliest natural hazards. Most lightning fatalities occur during spring and summer when people are outdoors for recreational activities, occupations, and home maintenance chores. Because thunderstorms are an almost-daily summertime occurrence around the Black Hills, people too often disregard them and continue their outdoor activities.

During the summer, check the weather forecasts before planning outdoor activities and periodically throughout the day. When you're outside; watch for signs of a developing storm; such as towering thunderheads, darkening skies, lightning, and increasing wind. Go to a safe location as soon as you see lightning or hear thunder. The current from a lightning flash can easily travel long distances, so don't wait until the lightning gets too close.



Outdoors:

- Move to a substantially-constructed building (one with electrical wiring and plumbing) or hard-topped vehicle. Partially-enclosed buildings like carports, picnic shelters, or dugouts and open vehicles such as convertibles, bicycles, motorcycles, golf carts, and all-terrain vehicles are not safe.
- Lightning typically strikes the tallest object. Do NOT stand under a tall isolated tree, on a hilltop, or in a clearing where you are the highest point; instead, go to a low area like a ravine, gully, or valley.
- Remove shoes with metal cleats; put down golf clubs, metal baseball bats, and backpacks.
- Stay away from metal fences, bleachers, clotheslines, pipes, rails, and tents with metal frames.
- Get off lakes, out of swimming pools, and away from beaches.

Indoors:

- Stay off porches and away from windows and doors.
- Do not lie on concrete floors or lean against concrete walls.
- Avoid using corded telephones except for emergencies.
- Do not use electrical appliances.
- Avoid contact with water and plumbing; do not wash your hands, take a shower, wash dishes, or do laundry.
- As a last resort, if you are caught in the open with no safe location nearby, sit on the ground with your feet together. Stay at least 15 feet from other people or objects so lightning won't travel between you.