



Florida Kidney Disaster Coalition

ALL-HAZARDS EDUCATIONAL SERIES:

LIGHTNING

"If you can see it, flee it. If you can hear it, clear it."

Florida is the Lightning Capitol of the U.S., leading the nation in lightning deaths. Lightning kills an average of nine Floridians each year, more than any other weather hazard, and injures an additional 37 people.

Most people who are struck by lightning are not killed, but they are left badly bruised and burned. The force of being hit by lightning can literally blow off people's shoes, shred their clothes and throw them violently through the air. It not only hits you hard, but at 50,000 degrees, it also burns right through you, leaving you with disfiguring scars and internal damage. Lightning survivors often have pain, loss of memory and other bad effects that sometimes last a lifetime.

A darkening cloud is often the first sign that lightning may strike. **As soon as you see lightning or hear thunder, you are immediately at risk.** By playing another inning or waiting even a few minutes to see if the storm is getting closer, you could be risking your life.

Go immediately inside a house or other enclosed structure to stay safe. **No place outdoors is safe!** Covered vehicles are fairly safe locations, but remember to keep your hands and feet away from the side of the car and away from the dashboard, steering wheel and windows.

People that have been struck by lightning do not carry an electrical charge. If you and the victim are in a safe area, it is safe and recommended to perform life saving first aid. You will not "get shocked" by touching the victim.

How far away is lightning from you? Use the **FLASH to BANG** method:

- When you see the **FLASH**
- Count the number of seconds to the **BANG** of thunder,
- Divide this number by 5,
- And this gives you the MILES the lightning is away from you.

It is recommended that if the thunder arrives within 30 seconds or less from your location, you should seek shelter. **Wait thirty minutes after the last thunder before going outside.**

For more information about lightning safety, check out the National Weather Service Web site at: www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov .