



SAFETY MOMENT Bulletin 1

LIGHTNING SAFETY: “When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors!”

January 2017

Summary: Lightning is a hazard, and even with proper procedures there will be a risk that lightning could injure someone in the backcountry where there are no “safe” locations to take cover from lightning. If caught in a thunderstorm with no “safe” location nearby, follow these last-resort tips. These will not prevent you from being hit, just slightly lessen the odds.

Key Information:

1. Avoid open fields, bodies of water, and exposed areas such as ridges and mountaintops.
2. Stay away from tall, isolated objects. Lightning typically strikes the tallest object. Do NOT seek shelter under tall isolated trees. The tree may help you stay dry but will significantly increase your risk of being struck by lightning. Rain will not kill you, but lightning can!.
3. Do NOT seek shelter under partially enclosed buildings (like a pavilion out in the open).
4. Do NOT seek shelter in shallow caves.
5. Stay away from long conductors like fences and railroad tracks. The current from a lightning flash can easily travel for long distances in a conductor.

Additional resources:

Guide to Safe Scouting

www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov.

<http://www.noaa.gov>

