

LIGHTNING CASUALTIES ARE PREVENTABLE

Guides for
Personal Safety

Have you been struck by lightning recently? Good! We trust you never are and that your escape will result from proper precautions and not from chance.

Available statistics show that approximately 300 fatalities and an estimated 1,500 injuries occur every year from lightning. The statistics also indicate that about nine-tenths of these casualties occur in rural areas, particularly in isolated buildings, and vacant and open land.

Although lightning usually strikes an isolated object on high ground, it does not always strike the highest object in the area. It takes a path of least resistance, and after making an initial contact the bolt may flash sideways or it may run along the ground in an unpredictable trail of destruction.

Lightning is a hazard both day and night, but the largest concentration of fatal injuries occur in the afternoon, with fewest deaths in the morning hours.

Cause of Lightning

In its latest data sheet, *Safe Conduct in Electrical Storms*, the National Safety Council briefly describes lightning as a high potential of electricity stored in storm clouds as they gather before a storm. The electrical charge is made up of electrified particles, either all positive or all negative.

On the ground, an equal number of positive and negative charges swarm over each other, climb structures, and gather on the highest points of those structures, in an effort to reach opposite charges in an approaching storm cloud.

Whenever the pressure becomes too great, the charges jump the gap and cause a lightning flash or flashes between the earth and cloud.

Proper Precautions

The period of greatest danger occurs before the rainstorm breaks, when the air "feels" charged. Persons in the open, especially golfers who so often find themselves in those hazardous areas, the iso-

lated clubhouse and the open course, should not wait for rain and thunder before seeking shelter.

The Rules of Golf allow for the danger of lightning. Rule 37-6, Discontinuance of Play states in part:

"Players shall not discontinue play on account of bad weather or for any other reason, unless.

a. They consider that there be danger from lightning, . . ."

The following guides for personal safety have been suggested by the National Bureau of Standards:

(a) Do not go out of doors or remain out during thunderstorms unless it is necessary. Stay inside of a building where it is dry, preferably away from fireplaces, stoves and other metal objects.

(b) If there is any choice of shelter, choose in the following order:

1. Large metal or metal-frame buildings.
2. Dwellings or other buildings which are protected against lightning.
3. Large unprotected buildings.
4. Small unprotected buildings.

(c) If remaining out of doors is unavoidable, keep away from:

1. Small sheds and shelters if in an exposed location.
2. Isolated trees.
3. Wire fences.
4. Hilltops and wide open spaces.

(d) Seek shelter in:

1. A cave.
2. A depression in the ground.
3. A deep valley or canyon.
4. The foot of a steep or overhanging cliff.
5. Dense woods.
6. A grove of trees.