

Lightning Prevention and Protection

The results of a lightning strike can be devastating to a garden. Not only is there the potential of a person being struck, but lightning can also set fire to fields, trees and buildings and damage sensitive electronic equipment. Proper lightning protection and following simple and commonsense steps during a storm can lower the risk of deadly and possibly costly incidents.

Lightning protection is providing the means by which a lightning strike can enter or leave the earth without causing property loss or damage of life. Parts of a structure most vulnerable to a lightning strike are chimneys, flagpoles, towers, deck rails, or other objects that project above the surrounding area. On buildings which have flat roofs, the roof edge is most likely to be struck.

Preparing for a lightning storm:

- Employ a lightning protection system that is capable of intercepting a lightning strike and conducting it to the ground.
- Install lightning arrestors on incoming telephone and power lines to block against electrical surges generated by lightning.
- Utilize surge protectors to protect electronic equipment from electrical surges generated by lightning
- Consider purchasing generators to protect plants and refrigerated property until electrical service is completely restored.
- Educate employees and volunteers about the hazards of lightning

During lightning storms:

- When a storm approaches, seek shelter in a substantial building. Avoid metal-roofed buildings.
- Discontinue any wet operations where people come in contact with wet or highly conductive environments.
- If you are caught outside, do not stand near open water, metal fences, wire, or other horizontal conductors. Do not stand near trees, poles, flagpoles, or other vertical conductors. Put down metal tools, golf clubs, or poles.
- If someone is hit by lightning and loses consciousness, start CPR and seek medical help immediately. Anyone who is stunned by lightning and does not lose consciousness should also seek medical help.

After lightning storms:

- Check the area for fires and/or electrical damage that may have occurred.
- Inspect the lightning arrest system for any damage that may have occurred from a direct lightning hit.
- Check all main electrical equipment and circuits if a direct hit is suspected, and before energizing equipment that was shut down.

For additional information, visit the Lightning Protection Institute at www.lightning.org. For specific questions regarding your facility, please contact our office at 1-800-350-7676.

Source: Hartford Insurance Company, Loss Prevention Department