

## Lightning Safety Tips

Lightning claims more lives every year than hurricanes, tornadoes, and floods combined, according to some reports. That's a lot of people. And golfers, with their hand held lightning rods, are as likely to be killed as anyone, unless they're careful.

How deadly is lightning? If you're hit by lightning, you probably won't get another chance to lower your golf handicap. A typical shock from lightning sends several thousand amps through your body in an instant. Unfortunately, it takes only two amps to stop your heart. So your chances of surviving after being struck by lightning aren't good. That's why you should know exactly what to do when you're on the course and lightning strikes.

Here's a short golf instruction session on what to do.

**Get off the course immediately:** If you see lightning or hear thunder, even in the distance, get off the course immediately. Squalls and thunderstorms bearing lightning move quickly sometimes. Before you know it, they're right on top of you, catching you unprepared. If you see trouble, get off the course instantly.

### Learn the 30-30 rule:

- Take appropriate shelter when you can count 30 seconds or less between lightning and thunder.
- Remain sheltered for 30 minutes after the last thunder.

**If you are in a group in the open** spread out, keeping people several yards apart.

**Stay away from objects that conduct electricity**, such as golf clubs, metal fences, golf carts. Contrary to what some people believe a golf cart does not offer protection.

**Avoid being the highest point in an open area.** Swinging a golf club or holding an umbrella (metal or graphite) can make you the tallest object and a target for lightning. Seek shelter in low-lying areas such as valleys, ditches and depressions but be aware of flooding.

**Find a dense wooded area:** If you are far from shelter find a dense wooded area. Don't seek refuge under a lone tree. That's extremely dangerous. Thickets of short trees, on the other hand, are relatively safe. Seek shelter in a low-lying area under a thick growth of small trees or bushes. Crouch down away from tree trunks.

**Fall to your knees:** If your skin tingles or your hair stands on the end, a lightning strike may be about to happen. Crouch down on the balls of your feet with your feet close together. Keep your hands on your knees and lower your head. Get as

low as possible without touching your hands or knees to the ground. DO NOT LIE DOWN! You want as little of the ground touching your body as possible as lightning often travels through the ground

**Stay away from water.** Lightning can strike the water and travel some distance from its point of contact. Don't stand in puddles even if you are wearing rubber boots.

**Take off you spiked shoes:** Not many golfers wear metal spikes these days. But some do. If you happen to be one and you get caught on the course when lightning strikes, take your shoes off. The metal attracts electricity. You're better off getting your socks wet than being hit by lightning.

**Source:** *A variety of websites on the topic*