

Safety Newsletter

JUNE 2024

NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

Lightning Awareness and Safety

According to the National Weather Service (NWS), lightning kills about 20 people in the United States each year, and hundreds more are severely injured. A common myth associated with lightning is that if it's not raining or isn't cloudy, you're safe from lightning. Lightning can often strike 3 miles from the center of a storm. Records have shown 10-15 mile strikes from the thunderstorm have also occurred.

To be prepared, your best source of up-to-date weather information is a [NOAA Weather Radio \(NWR\)](#). Portable weather radios are handy for outdoor activities. If you don't have NWR, stay up to date via internet, smart phone, radio or TV. If you're in a group, make sure the group has a lightning safety plan and are ready to use it. If you're in a large group, you'll need extra time to get everyone to a safe place.

Pay attention to the [daily forecasts](#) so you know what to expect during the day. Also pay attention to early signs of thun-

derstorms: high winds, dark clouds, rain, distant thunder or lightning. If these conditions exist, do not start a task you cannot quickly stop.

During thunderstorms no place outside is safe. If you can hear thunder, lightning is close enough to strike. Stop what you are doing and seek safety in a substantial building or a hard-topped metal vehicle.

The NWS has the following recommendations in the advent of threatening weather.

- Avoid open fields, the top of a hill or a ridge top.
- Stay away from tall, isolated trees or other tall objects. If you are in a forest, stay near a lower stand of trees.
- If you are in a group, spread out to avoid the current traveling between group members.
- If you are camping in an open area, set up camp in a valley, ravine or other low area. Remember, a tent offers NO protection from lightning.
- Stay away from water,

wet items, such as ropes, and metal objects, such as fences and poles. Water and metal do not attract lightning but they are excellent conductors of electricity. The current from a lightning flash will easily travel for long distances.

If a co-worker is struck by lightning. Lightning victims do not carry an electrical charge, are safe to touch, and need urgent medical attention. Cardiac arrest is the immediate cause of death for those who die. Some deaths can be prevented if the victim receives the proper first aid immediately. Call 9-1-1 and perform CPR if the person is unresponsive or not breathing. Use an Automatic External Defibrillator if one is available.



Lawnmower Care Reminder

The Safety Office would like to remind everyone to be safe when mowing. Here are tips to help keep you, others and property from being hurt or damaged:

- Read the equipment owner's manual.
- Use the right equipment for the job at hand.
- Inspect the equipment before each use.
- Keep guards, shields, switches and safety devices operational at all times.
- Know how to control and stop the equipment quickly.
- Wear personal protection equipment, as required.
- Wear eye and hearing protection as required.



- Wear long pants, sturdy shoes and work gloves.
- Conduct a pre-mowing inspection of the lawn and remove any debris, rocks, limbs, or other items that could become a projectile. Look for concealed hazards such as holes.
- Make sure the discharge chute faces away when mowing around stationary objects.
- Keep pedestrians and bystanders at least 30 feet away when using powered equipment.
- Pay close attention to your surroundings at all times.
- Mow up and down slopes, not across to prevent mower rollover.
- Keep hands and feet away from moving parts.
- Do not operate powered equipment if you are tired, sick, or taking medication.
- Take special precautions when working with electrical equipment. If you are using an extension cord, take care not to accidentally cut the cord.
- Do not smoke around gas-powered equipment. Allow hot equipment to cool before refueling.
- Maintain equipment and keep in good repair.



Firework's Safety Month

As Independence Day celebrations approach, it is important to remember that fireworks are dangerous and need to be properly handled. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, an estimated 10,200 people were treated for injuries caused by fireworks in 2022 with an increase on average of 535 fireworks related injuries per year requiring emergency department visits.

The safest way to enjoy fireworks is to attend a public

display put on by professionals. If using your own fireworks, remember the following:

- Use extreme caution and never allow young children to play with or use fireworks.
- Light items outside and away from structures, debris, grass, and flammable materials.
- Keep spectators a safe distance from the lighting area.
- Keep a bucket of water and/or water hose nearby.
- Never try to relight or handle malfunctioning fireworks. Soak with water and then properly dispose of them.
- Never ignite fireworks in a container such as a glass bottle.
- Know and follow local laws concerning fireworks.



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