

TOOLBOX TALK #22

LIGHTNING SAFETY

Stressing the importance of lightning awareness while working outdoors, the Center for Construction Research and Training (also known as CPWR) has published a hazard alert addressing the topic.

About 300 people are struck by lightning each year in the United States, resulting in approximately 30 deaths and numerous other serious injuries, according to the National Weather Service. Construction workers who work in open spaces or on high places such as roofs are at risk of being struck by lightning, CPWR states.



In their hazard alert, CPWR advises workers to:

- Seek shelter in an enclosed building or hard-topped vehicle when you hear thunder. Remain in the shelter under 30 minutes after the last sound of thunder.
- Avoid objects that conduct electricity, including metal objects such as scaffolds, heavy equipment or light poles; plug-in power tools or telephones; puddles or bodies of water; pipes; and trees.
- Follow your employer's written emergency action plan outlining lightning safety procedures.

If shelter is not available, workers should:

- Make sure you are not the highest object in the area.
- Refrain from standing in the open, on a roof, under a tree or in an open shelter.
- Reduce your risk of being struck by squatting down with your feet together, allowing only your feet to touch the ground.
- Cover your ears with your hands to protect against noise.