

## TOOLBOX TALK #49

### WATCH OUT FOR LIGHTNING

The threat of lightning is one of the hazards of working outdoors. OSHA points out that employees who work outdoors in open spaces or on or near tall objects have a significant risk for exposure to lightning. These include roofers, construction workers, utility workers, and landscapers.

OSHA cautions that lightning is unpredictable and can strike up to 10 miles away from a rainstorm. In fact, many lightning victims were struck because they didn't act promptly to get to a safe place, or they went back outside too soon after a storm passed. OSHA recommends that supervisors follow these lightning safety best practices for outdoor workers:



- **Check weather reports.** Tune in to radio and TV forecasts or consult weather websites and apps before beginning work. If inclement weather is in the forecast, reschedule work. When working outside, continually monitor the skies for signs of an approaching storm.
- **Seek shelter.** As soon as lightning is seen or thunder is heard, supervisors should instruct workers to head indoors. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration recommends seeking out fully enclosed buildings and remaining sheltered in place for at least 30 minutes after hearing the last of the thunder. If a building isn't available, supervisors should instruct workers to stay in a hard-topped metal vehicle with the windows rolled up.
- **Stay phone-safe.** Instruct workers not to use corded phones once thunder is heard, except in an emergency. Cell phones and cordless phones are safe to use during storms.