

Safety Advisory Committee

Advisory Notice. 19/June/23 All

Lightning

There are about 240,000 lightning strikes incidents around the world each year. According to National Geographic, about 2,000 people are killed annually worldwide by lightning. Some of those who survive suffer serious and life changing injuries. People who are outdoors are most at risk. In Ireland Lightning deaths are very rare but they do happen.

There are three different ways of being struck by lightning:

1. Direct strike: the lightning hits you and goes to earth through you.
2. Side Flash: the lightning hits another object and jumps sideways to hit you.
3. Ground strike: the lightning hits the ground travels through it and hits you on the way.

Rowers are particularly vulnerable as they are often in wide open spaces where they are the highest thing around.

People struck by lightning are predominantly hit before and after the peak of the storm. The 30/30 rule helps to ensure that people are sheltering during the riskiest parts of the storm. If the flash to bang time is 30 seconds, or less, then find shelter. Stay there until 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder.

What should you do.

- Check the weather forecast – if lightning is forecast then find an indoor activity
 - If you are on water, get into shelter as quickly as possible; water will transmit strikes from further away. Proximity to water is a common factor in lightning strikes.
 - Find shelter inside a large building or a motor vehicle. The inside of a car is safe as lightning will spread over the metal of the vehicle before earthing through the tyres.
 - If you are outside with nowhere to shelter, make yourself as small a target as possible by crouching down with your feet together, hands on knees and your head tucked in.
 - Do not shelter beneath tall or isolated trees, one in four people struck by lightning are sheltering under trees.
 - Find shelter quickly if your hair begins to stand on end or nearby appliances begin buzzing - it may mean lightning is about to strike.
 - Lightning can be conducted, in a building, by aerials, piping or other wires. Except in cases of emergency, don't use your telephone (landline or mobile) until the storm is over.
 - Call the emergency services if someone is hit; they will need urgent help. A lightning strike is not usually instantly fatal, a victim's heart and/or breathing may stop. Early use of CPR may well save their life. You will not receive an electric shock from the victim.
- Take Care – Lightning can be deadly but is easily avoided.

A study of 300 deaths from being struck by lightning showed that 13% were on or near water.

FOR ADVICE ON ANY SAFETY MATTERS EMAIL clubsupport@rowingireland.ie

TO REPORT ANY INCIDENTS PLEASE USE THE ROWING IRELAND IROWSAFE ONLINE REPORTING SYSTEM [link here](#). "SEE IT, REPORT IT, IMPROVE IT".