

# Lightning Safety Facts

- The “30-30 Rule” offers easy to follow lightning safety guidance. When you see lightning, count the time until you hear thunder. If that time is 30 seconds or less, the thunderstorm is close enough to be dangerous. Seek shelter. If you can’t see the lightning, just hearing the thunder is a good back-up rule. Wait at least 30 minutes after the lightning flash before leaving shelter.
- No place OUTSIDE is safe during a thunderstorm!
- A house, or other fully enclosed building with wiring and plumbing offers your best protection against lightning. Once inside stay away off telephones, computers and other electrical appliances and stay away from sinks, showers, indoor pools and other plumbing. Don’t watch lightning from windows or doorways. Inner rooms are safer.
- A car with a metal roof and sides is your second best protection against lightning. As in a house, don’t touch any conducting paths leading outside. It is the metal shell that protects you, not the rubber tires.
- Lightning is the #2 weather killer in the United States over a 30-year period, killing more than hurricanes and tornadoes combined! Only floods kill more.
- Lightning is the #1 weather killer in Florida, killing more than all other weather sources combined! Florida leads the U.S. in lightning deaths, injuries, and casualties!
- Lightning kills about 60 people in the U.S. each year and inflicts severe life-long debilitating injuries on at least a 1,000 people a year.
- Long-term lightning symptoms are primarily neurological and are difficult to diagnose. Though very variable, some of the more frequent symptoms include memory deficit, sleep disturbance, chronic pain, dizziness, and chronic pain. Lightning survivors sometimes have trouble processing information, are easily distracted, and have personality changes. Symptoms may not appear until months after the lightning strike. The ‘lightning strike and electric shock survivors, international’ is the main support group for lightning survivors ([www.lightning-strike.org](http://www.lightning-strike.org)).
- Lightning causes about \$5 billion of economic impact in the U.S. each year!
- Pennsylvania leads the U.S. in lightning damage!
- The odds of an individual being a lightning casualty in a year in the U.S. is about 280,000-to-1 – if you’re an average person, in an average location, with average outside activities, and average lightning safety behavior. That’s about 3,000-to-one over your lifetime, with about 300-to-one odds of being seriously affected by a family member or friend being a lightning survivor. In Florida, it’s closer to 80,000-to-1 per year of being struck, 1,000-to-one in a lifetime, and 100-to-one of being seriously affected.
- The odds of an individual being killed by lightning each year in the U.S. is about 3 million-to-1, if you’re an average person, in an average location, with average outside activities, and average lightning safety behavior. That’s about 35,000-to-one over a life time, and about 3,000-to-one of being seriously affected by a family member or friend being killed by lightning. In Florida, it’s closer to 900,000-to-one per year, or 12,000-to-1 over a lifetime, and 1,000-to-1 of being seriously affected.
- Keraunomedicine is the medical study of lightning casualties.

For more information, go to [www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov](http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov)