

THUNDERSTORMS

Safety Topic V6-0529

Site Safety, Outdoors, Weather

Before and during outdoor work, check local weather reports and keep an eye out for darkening clouds and increasing wind speeds, which can indicate developing thunderstorms.

- Lightning is unpredictable and can strike outside the heaviest rainfall areas or even up to 10 miles away from any rainfall.

Many lightning victims are caught outside during a storm because they did not act promptly to get to a safe place, or they go back outside too soon after a storm has passed.

- If there are signs of an approaching thunderstorm, workers should not begin any task that they cannot quickly stop if they need to get to safety.
- If you hear thunder when working outdoors, even a distant rumble, get to a safe place immediately.



During storms or high winds, OSHA prohibits:

- work on or from scaffolds
- crane hoists
- work on top of walls

Scaffolding work may continue if a qualified person determines it is safe and personal fall protection or wind screens are provided.

Crane hoists may proceed only if a qualified person determines it is safe.

Outdoor workers should know ahead of time where to go if the weather turns dangerous and they need to get to safety.

- Seek out fully-enclosed buildings with electrical wiring and plumbing. In modern buildings, the interior wiring and plumbing will act as an earth ground.
- If safe building structures are not accessible, workers can seek shelter in hard-topped metal vehicles with the windows rolled up.

Discussion

Image: 0002471 Kimberly Boyles/Shutterstock.com

What are some signs of an approaching thunderstorm?

Besides lightning, what are some other thunderstorm hazards?