

Lightning and Severe Weather

About 8 minutes to deliver

Thirty miles away is close enough, the safe places are fewer than you think, and the calm after a storm is not the end of it.

Lightning strikes from a storm that is still miles off, out of a sky that looks fine overhead. There is no such thing as a safe place outdoors during a thunderstorm.

THE 30/30 RULE

- When you hear thunder, go in. Thunder carries about ten miles, so if you can hear it you are already within range of a strike.
- Thirty seconds between the flash and the thunder means the storm is roughly six miles away. That is close enough to stop work.
- Wait thirty minutes after the last thunder before going back out. Strikes come out of the trailing edge, over ground that has gone quiet.

WHERE IS SAFE, AND WHERE IS NOT

- Safe: a substantial building with wiring and plumbing, or a fully enclosed metal-topped vehicle with the windows up. In the vehicle, do not touch the radio, the door frame or anything metal.
- Not safe: an open equipment cab, a scaffold, a roof, a lift basket, a shed, a portable toilet, a tent, a dugout, or under a tree. A tree is the worst of them — the strike goes down the trunk and out through the ground into everyone standing near it.
- Get off and away from anything tall or conductive: cranes, booms, masts, scaffold, rebar mats, pipe racks, fences, and anything you are holding that is long and metal.

WIND

- Cranes and lifts come down at the manufacturer's wind limit, not at the point where it feels unpleasant. Know the number for the machine before you need it.
- Sheet goods, forms, scaffold sheeting and debris netting become airborne first. Secure or drop them ahead of the front, not during it.
- Tarps and plywood are sails. Two people, or nobody.

AFTER

- Do not assume the ground is safe. Downed lines energise fences, puddles and rebar. Stay well back and treat every wire as live.
- Watch for flash flooding in trenches and low ground — an excavation that was safe this morning is a different excavation after two inches of rain, and it needs a competent person to look at it again before anyone goes in.
- Somebody struck by lightning carries no charge. They are safe to touch. Start CPR and call 911.

ASK THE CREW

- What is our signal to stop work, and who makes that call?
- If a storm came through in ten minutes, where would this crew actually shelter?
- What is loose on this site that would go airborne in a gust?

29 CFR 1926.20 · 29 CFR 1910.38

This is a toolbox talk, not a course. It is general awareness on one topic — not site-specific, not a hazard assessment, and not a substitute for assessment of your workplace by a competent person, your written programs, or manufacturers' instructions. It does not by itself satisfy any OSHA training requirement. Regulations change; verify against the current standard. Whoever delivers it is responsible for deciding it is suitable and sufficient for the work. Where a talk covers first aid, resuscitation, or mental health it is general safety information, not medical advice, not a substitute for professional medical care or certified emergency-response training, and it confers no certification — in an emergency, call 911. Free to print and use, as is, with no warranty of any kind. Migna Safety Solutions · training.mignasafety.com

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ATTENDANCE RECORD

Lightning and Severe Weather

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Date

Job / site

Delivered by

Company

#	Print name	Signature	Date
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I delivered this talk and determined it was suitable for this crew and this work.

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