



T&TEC

The Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission wishes to advise of the following precautions in the interest of public safety:

Living with *Lightning* Safely...

What is Lightning?

Lightning is a very high electrical charge that travels from clouds to the ground or to other clouds.

Lightning is usually formed in high dark, anvil-shaped thunderclouds, which themselves can form in 30 minutes or less. Because the length of a lightning bolt is anywhere from 3 to 16 kilometres, don't wait for the storm to be overhead before you seek shelter. The most damage is done when the cloud is 3 to 8 km away. Therefore, it is possible to be struck by lightning in clear skies.

Lightning usually strikes the tallest good conductor within a 50-metre radius. The safest place to be in a thunderstorm is inside a home or large building.

Every year, lightning causes property damage, many injuries and about 1,000 fatalities around the world.

Voltage in a single cloud-to-ground lightning stroke can range from 100 million to 1 billion volts, with average temperatures of 27,000°C (the sun is only 6,000°C)!

Here's how to minimise the risk to yourself and your loved ones:

When a storm approaches:

- Get out of the water and off small boats
- Stop construction on fences pipelines or structural steel buildings
- Stop tractor or yard work
- Don't take laundry off the clothes line

When indoors:

- Keep away from open doors and windows, large appliances and metal pipes
- Don't use hand-held electrical appliances or the telephone (except in emergencies)
- Don't wash dishes, take showers or do other things with water

In a car (the 2nd safest place):

- Keep your hands and arms inside the vehicle
- Don't touch any metal

In the open:

If your hair stands on end or your skin starts to tingle, you may be about to be struck by lightning.

- Don't seek shelter inside small sheds or under metal car ports
- Put down golf clubs, get off golf carts, motorcycles, tractors and bicycles

- Bend forward, placing your hands on your knees to minimise the risk of becoming a lightning conductor
- Don't lie flat – you will have a lot more contact with the ground- potentially fatal

At sea:

Boat owners should ensure that their craft are equipped with lightning protection systems.

- Stop all recreational activity
- Take shelter inside the cabin
- Drop or lash all antennae and fishing rods to horizontal positions
- Disconnect all electronics

In an open boat:

- Sit or crouch on the deck
- Don't touch controls needlessly (if you must, touch only one control at a time)

When lightning strikes:

Proper first-aid treatment can save a life. Electricity cannot be passed from a lightning victim to you.

- Give mouth-to-mouth resuscitation if you feel a pulse
- Give CPR (cardio-pulmonary resuscitation) if you don't feel a pulse and the victim appears not to be breathing

Remember:

- Lightning usually strikes the tallest objects in the area – trees, utility poles, etc.
- Never shelter under trees in a thunderstorm
- Never attempt to touch or move downed powerlines – they may be "live"

Call T&TEC instead at:

North:	625-1296; 1774
South:	657-7281/4; 652-0817
East:	643-2510; 1974
Central:	636-9107; 4871
Tobago:	639-2541; 2015

When our switchboard is overloaded, you might hear a ringing tone instead of a "busy" tone. Please remember that hundreds of people may be calling. If your power is not restored in 30 minutes, please try us again.

**Electricity...
a cost you can control.**

