

# Lightning



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 are some tips to minimise the risk of lightning strikes to yourself and your loved ones.

## 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 2 to 16 kilometers, don't wait for the storm to be overhead before you seek shelter. The most damage is done when the cloud is 3 to 8km away. Therefore, it is possible to be struck by lightning in clear skies.

Lightning usually strikes the tallest good conductor. The safest place to be during a thunderstorm is inside a house, large building or enclosed vehicle.

## When a storm approaches

- Get out of the water and harbour small boats.
- Stop construction on fences, pipelines or structural steel buildings.

- Stop tractors and the use of lawn equipment.
- Do not take laundry off the clothes line to avoid being struck by lightning.

## When indoors

- Disconnect all electrical equipment to avoid possible damage.
- Keep away from open doors and windows, large appliances and metal pipes.
- Do not use hand-held electrical appliances or the telephone (except in emergencies).
- Do not wash dishes as domestic water pipes can act as a conductor.



## In an open boat

- Sit or crouch on the deck.
- Do not touch controls needlessly (if you must, touch only one control at a time).

## At sea

- Boat owners should ensure that their crafts 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 a car

- Keep your hands and arms inside the vehicle
- Do not 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.
- Do not seek shelter inside small sheds or under metal car ports.
- Put down golf clubs and 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.
- Do not lie flat- you will have a lot more contact with the ground- which can be potentially fatal.





### *When Lightning Strikes*

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

If lightning should strike a T&TEC pole or any of its installations call: 800-TTEC (8832).

### *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 power lines. They may be "live."

## CALL T&TEC at:

<b>HEAD OFFICE</b>	<b>623-2611</b> <b>623-6274</b> <b>623-6291</b>
<b>NORTHERN AREA OFFICE</b>	<b>623-5070</b> <b>625-7531</b>
<b>EASTERN AREA OFFICE</b>	<b>643-2538</b> <b>643-2510</b> <b>643-2433</b>
<b>CENTRAL AREA OFFICE</b>	<b>636-8107</b> <b>636-4871</b>
<b>SOUTHERN AREA OFFICE</b>	<b>657-7281</b> <b>652-0817</b>
<b>POINT FORTIN AREA OFFICE</b>	<b>648-2791</b> <b>648-2903</b>
<b>RIO CLARO AREA OFFICE</b>	<b>644-2475</b> <b>644-2262</b>
<b>TOBAGO OFFICE</b>	<b>639-2541</b> <b>639-2015</b>
<b>T&amp;TEC HOTLINE NUMBER</b>	<b>800- TTEC (8832)</b>
<b>STREET LIGHTING DEPARTMENT</b>	<b>800-BULB (2852)</b>

## EMERGENCY NUMBERS:

<b>POLICE</b>	<b>999/911</b> <b>(Tobago) 639-1200</b>
<b>FIRE/AMBULANCE</b>	<b>990</b> <b>(Tobago) 639-1000</b>
<b>EHS/EMS</b>	<b>811</b> <b>653-4343</b> <b>624-4343</b> <b>(Tobago) 639-4444</b>
<b>COAST GUARDS</b>	<b>634-4440</b> <b>634-4439</b>
<b>ODPM</b>	<b>640-1285</b> <b>640-8905</b> <b>640-8653</b> <b>640-6493</b> <b>800 ODPM(6376)</b>
<b>TEMA</b>	<b>(Tobago) 660-7489</b>
<b>CERT</b>	<b>(Speyside, Tobago) 660-6096</b>
<b>CALL CENTRE</b>	<b>(Tobago) 211</b>

