



When a lightning strike occurs, electricity can travel through water and cause electrocution. Because light travels at a faster speed than sound, you can see a lightning bolt before the sound of thunder reaches you. To judge how close lightning is, count the seconds between the flash and the thunder clap. Each second represents about 300 metres. If you can count less than 30 seconds between the lightning strike and the thunder, the storm is less than 10 km away and there is an 80 percent chance the next strike will happen within that 10 km. Lightning may strike several kilometres away from the parent cloud and precautions should be taken even if the thunderstorm is not directly overhead.

Consequently, the following procedures should be followed by any ADPC boats on the water at the time of an imminent or current lightning storm.

- Stay off the water if lightning conditions prevail.
- If on the water at the time of a lightning storm approaching, the sweep is to take charge of the boat and the safety of the paddlers
- Watch for the development of large well-defined rising cumulus clouds. As the clouds become darker and more anvil-shaped, the thunderstorm is already in progress.
- Watch for distant lightning. Listen for distant thunder. Take appropriate shelter when you can count 15 seconds or less between lightning and thunder.
- Remain sheltered for 30 minutes after the last thunder.
- If caught in a lightning storm head for shore immediately. The sweep should if possible remain seated whilst sweeping. Paddlers should avoid immersing hands in the water.

#### **Injury through lightning strike**

If a person is struck by lightning, immediate medical attention may be the difference between life and death. With proper medical treatment, most victims can survive a lightning strike.

**VICTIMS DO NOT CARRY ANY ELECTRICAL CHARGE** It is important that lightning strike victims receive immediate medical attention. They are safe to handle and cannot injure anyone providing medical attention.

**LIGHTNING CAUSES CARDIAC ARREST IN MOST FATALITIES** The surge of electricity through a person's body results in cardiac arrest being the immediate cause of death in most lightning fatalities.

Check to see if a lightning victim has a pulse and is breathing. If not, CPR should be administered immediately where this is known by a person present at the time.

**CALL 000 ASAP. Describe clearly where you are. If necessary seek advice about the best action to be taken until the arrival of the ambulance.**

Lightning Safety Awareness,

[http://www.radon.illinois.gov/iema/publications/pdf/Lightning\\_Safety\\_Awareness\\_Guidebook.pdf](http://www.radon.illinois.gov/iema/publications/pdf/Lightning_Safety_Awareness_Guidebook.pdf)  
Environment Canada, <http://www.mb.ec.gc.ca/air/summersevere/ae00s19.en.html>

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