



Lightning Safety



White Sands is considered to be a dry area for most of the year. What people do not realize is that thunderstorms can appear without any notice. Probably the most dangerous severe weather occurs during the monsoon season. From mid June until mid October, late afternoon thunderstorms are common. These storms can be beautiful to watch and the associated rains turn the desert green, but it is important to know what to do when lightning and thunder is nearby. Lightning is beautiful; it is also deadly.

HOW DO THUNDER AND LIGHTNING STORMS OCCUR?

Thunderstorms, lightning storms, and electrical storms are one in the same, and lightning is always accompanied by thunder. These storms need three things in order to occur: moisture in the air (humidity), unstable air (warm air that rises rapidly), and lift (a mountain range forces air upwards).

DOES LIGHTNING KILL? In the United States, lightning strikes kill approximately 80 people per year, and dozens more obtain permanent disabilities. To significantly lessen the risk of getting struck by lightning, follow the lightning safety tips to the right.

Lightning Safety Tips

1. Get into a hardtop vehicle (with windows rolled up) or building (with windows completely shut) at the first rumble of thunder.
2. Do not use a corded phone during a lightning storm. Cell phones are okay.
3. Stay away from all wiring, plumbing, and electrical equipment.
4. Get away from water (Don't be a fool, get out of the pool!).
5. Trees should not be used as shelter during an electrical storm.
6. If caught in an exposed area during a thunderstorm, get into a crouched position with your feet together. keep a thirty foot distance between yourself and any other person.
7. People who are struck by lightning do not carry an electrical charge afterwards. If they need medical or first aid attention, you will not get electrocuted from helping them.
8. When thunder roars, go indoors!
9. Lightning can strike up to 10 miles ahead of the storm.
10. It's safe to come back outside after 30 minutes without a strike.