

## Colorado Lightning Safety

The unpredictable nature of Colorado Front Range thunderstorms means there is no absolute guarantee of safety from lightning, however, the following safety guidelines can greatly reduce the risk of injury or death.

- Practice the **30/30 Lightning Rule**: Begin to seek shelter when the time between the lightning flash and the rumble of thunder is 30 seconds or less, and do not resume activities until at least 30 minutes after the last audible thunder.
- Safer shelters include large, **enclosed structures** and **enclosed vehicles**. Small metal sheds or **open picnic shelters are not safe structures**. Open-cab vehicles (golf carts, construction equipment, etc.), convertible vehicles (even with the top up) are **not** safe vehicles.
- Stay away from all metal vehicles that you are not using for shelter, **including bicycles**.
- During the thunderstorm season, begin hiking, biking, or climbing early in the day and plan to be at and off the highest elevation point of your trip **before or no later than noon**.
- Do not stand under or near an isolated tree or small stand of trees. If caught in a forest during a thunderstorm, seek shelter in a low area within a dense stand of trees.
- Avoid being the tallest object in the surrounding landscape.
- If you are with a group of people, stay several yards apart from each other.
- If you are caught in the open during a thunderstorm and there are no enclosed buildings or vehicles nearby, the safest position to be in is crouched down on the balls of your feet. Do not allow your hands or any other body parts to touch the ground and keep your feet as close together as possible to minimize your contact with the ground.
- Since water conducts electricity, stop swimming or boating as soon as you see or hear a storm.

Be aware that lightning can and does occasionally strike many miles away from a thunderstorm. These "**bolts from the blue**" have been documented to strike more than 25 miles away from a storm.

