



Does Your Safety Plan Consider Lightning?

Insights

7.23.13

The headline, nine workers struck by lightning, tends to grab one's attention. As a longtime Scout leader, I take lightning seriously, but my sense is that most workers do not. Periodically I see employers investigated because of a complaint to OSHA alleging that construction workers or saw mill employees or some other group are exposed to lightning hazards. The following incident reminds us to take this concern seriously and to take steps to ensure that employees take the threat seriously:

*Nine People Struck By Lightning In Wellington At Grant Family Farms
By Beano July 18, 2013 5:08 PM share on Facebook share on Twitter The storms rolling across Larimer County this afternoon are packing quite a wallop. We're hearing reports of flooding, road closures and mudslides in Rist Canyon and in the High Park burn area, a flash flood warning for central Larimer County until 6PM, as well as scary news of ten people getting struck by lightning in Wellington. (Reports are now saying nine people were hit, not ten.)*

According to CBS Denver,

"Nine farm workers were struck by lightning north of Wellington on Thursday afternoon.

The Wellington Fire Chief said the workers were in the Grant Farms area.

At least two of the workers were rushed to the hospital in critical condition.

You can see more coverage of the story in the CBS News video below.

[Continue reading at the July 18 post on Colorado K99.](#)

A quick Google found articles asserting that 1000 Americans are struck each year, with around 100 dying, and over 24,000 a year struck by lightning worldwide. These figures may be exaggerated but the concern is real. I found over 118 entries in the last few years when I searched lightning-related fatalities [on OSHA's site:](#)

200232320 08/04/2009 1032500 0851 Four Employees Are Injured When Lightning Strikes Platform

201924925 07/23/2009 0626700 X 1799 Employee Dies After Being Struck By Lightning

200374809 07/13/2009 0454510 X 1799 Employee Dies After Fall From Roof

200677813 06/08/2009 0418800 X 0782 Lawn Care Worker Get Struck By Lightning

202079729 06/28/2008 0453730 9512 Three Employee Were Struck By Lightening While Fighting Fire
202483566 06/23/2008 0420600 X 0722 Employee Is Killed When Lightning Strikes
200676971 09/21/2007 0418800 X 0191 Employee Struck By Lighting
200676906 08/13/2007 0418800 X 0782 Employee Is Struck By Lightning And Killed
200356293 06/26/2007 0453710 X 1799 Two Employees Are Injured By Lightning, One Later Dies
201282753 06/25/2007 0418100 X 1751 Employee Is Killed By Lightning Strike
200713162 06/12/2007 0636900 X 1389 Employee Is Killed When Fumes Ignite From Lightening
200676765 05/19/2007 0418800 X 1761 Employee Is Killed When Struck By Lightning
202461703 08/17/2006 0420600 X 1751 Employee Is Struck And Killed By Lightning
200554491 07/27/2006 0625700 X 1761 Employee Is Killed When Struck By Lightning

If one goes to the OHA page and hits "detail," you may be surprised at the variety of work settings.

For a few quick resources:

FEMA's Thunderstorms and Lightning page.

National Geographic Lightning Safety Tips.

NSC Safety + Health Magazine

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Related People



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