



TOWN OF CANTON VOLUNTEER Fire & EMS Department

Valuing Life...at a Moment's Notice



In Response....

From the Desk of Fire & EMS Chief Rich Hutchings

Town of Canton Volunteer Fire & EMS Department

Spring Storms: If You Can See It, Hear It or Feel It, You're in It!

True Story: First the house shook. Then the lights flickered off...then on...then out. In the darkness, they smelled smoke. Something electrical was burning. The roof of a family residence in North Canton had been struck by lightning. Volunteer firefighters arrived and searched for the source of the fire in the home. Had the lightning strike traveled through the electrical wiring in the residence? How about the phone lines or perhaps the plumbing?

In Response to spring storms, which typically arrive in the late afternoon and early evenings of April and May bringing lightning, high winds and flooding, there are some basic precautions to take to protect yourself against fire and medical emergencies:

Safety Indoors: A lightning storm is not the time to take a shower, do the laundry or dishes. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), recommends shutting off or unplugging all appliances and electrical items. Stay away from windows and doors, too.

Only use a generator to keep lights and appliances working if you have a carbon monoxide detector, and can place the generator in a well-ventilated location away from vents, windows or doors to ensure exhaust fumes are unable to find their way into the home.

If you find standing water in your basement, be certain the power has been shut off before you enter. A flooded basement can extinguish the pilot lights on hot water heaters or furnaces allowing gas to invade the home.

Safety Outdoors: The NFPA warns that you are not safe anywhere out of doors during a thunder storm. Stop playing golf, mowing the lawn or swimming laps in the pool. Further, they recommend finding shelter inside a building or at least a hard-topped vehicle.

If your hair stands on end, lightning is about to strike. If you find yourself in an open area, crouch low to the ground on the balls of your feet, put your hands over your ears and place your head between your knees. People who are struck by lightning do not carry an electrical charge. They do, however, require immediate medical attention. If you find someone who has been struck, call 9-11 and hopefully help to save a life.

As part of Canton Volunteer Fire & EMS Department's ongoing partnership with the community, each month *In Response* will suggest ways to empower you in your own safety, and ultimately assist volunteer fire and EMS personnel should we ever have to respond to an emergency in your life.

Until then..... be safe.

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