

LIGHTNING SAFETY POLICY

CEOE School of Marine Science and Policy (SMSP)

The purpose of this policy is to increase the safety of SMSP personnel in the field and decrease the likelihood of being struck by lightning while doing field work.

General Information

All CMS faculty, students and staff are required to familiarize themselves yearly with lightning safety either by going through the University's Department of Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) web site at <http://www.udel.edu/ehs/lightningsafety.html> or other available resources such as <http://www.lightningsafety.com/> <https://www.sagamorepub.com/ebooks/User/IP2002/jpra203/Article3.pdf> (Florida's Municipal Recreation and Park Agencies) <http://www.siue.edu/ATHLETIC/SPMED/lightning.pdf> (NCAA)

Field Operations

All persons involved in field work, including use of small boats, should be aware of the daily weather forecast. This includes the student's advisor, who may not actually be in the field. In the event of a forecast for thunderstorms and especially severe storms, the weather forecast should be monitored throughout the day. One can tune to AM radio (1600 and above) or go to several web sites including NOAA (<http://www.noaa.gov/>); The Weather Channel (<http://www.weather.com/>); Accuweather (<http://www.accuweather.com/>); Weather Sentry (<http://www.weathersentry.com/>).

We also have a link to weather at <http://www.ceoe.udel.edu/marine/weather/index.shtml>

Any lightning activity will be evident by the disruption of the radio AM signal. The National Weather Forecast can be monitored on small boats, by using the hand-held VHF radios onboard. Field operations should also be planned to start early in the morning, so that the work can be completed by early afternoon since late afternoon thunderstorms are typical during our summer months.

If severe weather is imminent, field operations should be ceased or at least conducted in close proximity to the field vehicle (car, truck, etc.). If lightning or thunderstorms are observed and are less than six miles away (30 seconds between flash and thunder or "flash-to-bang"), field work should temporarily cease, and field personnel should be in their field vehicles or other safe shelter. As a general rule, one should wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder or lightning event was observed before resuming operations.

Small Boat Work

For those working on the water in boats, frequent checks of the onboard VHF radios for weather forecast should be made. On days where the weather forecast is for high likelihood of thunderstorm activity, field parties should be extra cautious about being on the water. At the first indication of any thunderstorm activity, all operations should cease and all should return to the landing area or the nearest land if the storm is closing fast. If one cannot make it to a vehicle, stay away from the highest points in the local topography (trees, towers, power lines) and find a low spot to lie down in to wait out the storm. Parking the boat under a bridge is also acceptable in the event land cannot be reached quickly.

CEOE SMSP Safety Committee; Adopted 9/04/09.