

Hot Tips

Good info for the new ham, and old stuff to refresh your memory



Operating in the rain

If you're ever considering whether you should operate your radio out in the rain, there's only one answer : **DON'T**. We're not talking about keeping *your radio equipment* dry or safe from the elements, although that's important too. This is about *you* and **lightning safety**.

Whether or not a particular rain storm appears to generate lightning is a moot point, because *every* rain storm can potentially produce lightning. As the saying goes, **When thunder roars, go indoors**.

While getting inside during a rain storm is not a guaranteed protection against lightning, you stand a much lower chance of being affected by it inside an enclosed shelter.

But, what if...

That being said, there are times when being outside in a rain storm is almost unavoidable. During severe weather or even an earthquake, you could easily be caught outdoors without any shelter, and no place to hide out in. If you happen to be outdoors and away from civilization, your vehicle, while not perfect, might likely be the best place to shelter. So, if you *must* be outdoors during a rain storm, what can you do to protect yourself from lightning?

- Stay away from trees, ponds, lakes, hilltops, and other high places
- Avoid large conductive objects, like chain-linked fences, barbed wire, power lines, towers, and utility poles
- Never lie flat on the ground, because that will turn your small grounded contact area into a much larger one
- If you're out in or on the water, get to shore as quickly as you can
- If you're in a group, split up so that you won't be sharing the lightning strike

- Cliffs and rocky overhangs do not make good shelters from lightning
- Avoid open vehicles, such as motorcycles, bicycles, convertibles, scooters, golf carts, and ATVs
- Avoid open structures, such as gazebos, baseball dugouts, metal sheds, picnic pavilions, carports, and sports arenas; they won't protect you from lightning

If you can hear thunder, you're close enough to be struck by lightning. After hearing it, and you're outside, stop what you're doing and seek shelter in a real building or a hard-topped vehicle. You can learn more about lightning, protection, and even busted myths about lightning at the following pages:

- [National Weather Service](#)
- [NOAA \(National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration\)](#)
- [National Park Service](#)
- [CDC \(Centers for Disease Control\)](#)

