Storms are always a big threat to employees working outdoors. They bring about harsh winds that may cause falling trees, downed power lines, swaying of scaffolds and erosions in trenches.

But there’s another hazard that comes with storms and causes serious fatalities. This is no other than lightning, one of the serious killers of outdoor workers. While anyone can be a victim of this natural phenomenon, it’s a mistake to think that it cannot be avoided altogether.
Here are some guidelines in preventing this electrifying hazard:

- Always monitor weather conditions, especially when going outdoors.
- Be prepared to shut down the job if thunderstorms are forecast.
- Keep an eye on the weather throughout the day.
- Stay tuned to the radio for updates on the weather.
- If lightning threatens, seek shelter indoors.
- If a storm is up and you’re caught outdoors, seek the appropriate shelter.
Here are examples of safe shelter sites:

* substantial buildings

* low ground — seek cover in clumps of bushes

* fully enclosed metal vehicles with the windows rolled up
The following are unsafe areas to seek shelter in:

* electric/power poles
* open fields
* water
* electrical equipment
* heavy and road machinery
* solitary trees
* high ground and caves
* all outdoor metal objects, like gates and fences
* high mast light poles
* metal bleachers
• You can determine the distance of lightning by listening carefully to the thunder that accompanies it. If you hear thunder, the associated lightning is at most 6-8 miles away. The distance lightning can strike ahead of a thunderstorm can also be a number of miles. If you hear thunder, immediately suspend activities while allowing enough time to seek shelter.

• If you feel your hair standing on end, and/or hear “crackling noises”, you are in lightning’s electric field and it is close.

• If lightning is extremely close to you and you are caught outside without shelter, immediately remove baseball cap and other metal objects and place them away from you. Put your feet together, duck your head, and crouch down low in baseball catcher’s stance with hands on knees.
- Wait at least 30 minutes from the last observed lightning or sound of thunder before resuming activities.

- Be cautious in following a thunderstorm as the lightning may not be over.

- If a co-worker gets struck by lightning, contact the Campus Safety Department immediately.