



**NEW JERSEY PUBLIC EMPLOYEES
OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH**

**NJ PEOSH
ALERT #38**



**Safety & Health Alert
PREVENTING WORKER INJURIES AND
DEATHS INVOLVING LIGHTNING EXPOSURE**

Employees may be exposed to serious injury or death whose jobs involve working outdoors in open spaces, on or near tall objects, or near conductive materials (e.g., metal, water).

FOR MORE INFO:



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ATTENTION: ALL PUBLIC EMPLOYERS

Please ensure that this information is shared with all appropriate personnel

March 2023

- Employees may be exposed to serious injury or death whose jobs involve working outdoors in open spaces, on or near tall objects, or near conductive materials (e.g. metal, water).
- Outdoor workers at high risk for lightning hazards include but are not limited to: pool and bathing beach lifeguards, public works, and public employees working at a golf course.
- To ensure safety, public employers who hire employees to work outdoors must provide adequate training which includes awareness of understanding lightning risks, characteristics, and precautions to minimize workplace hazards associated with lightning.
- In accordance with 29 CFR 1910.132(d)(1), The employer shall conduct a workplace hazard assessment to determine if hazards are present, or are likely to be present, which necessitate the employer understand the hazards employees are exposed to as well as the use of the proper personal protective equipment (PPE).
- The hazard assessment shall include assessing the potential of employee exposure to hazards of the environment. For all outdoor workers, employers can reference the Federal OSHA Fact Sheet 3863, "Lightning Safety When Working Outdoors."



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ME**



**OFFICE OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES
OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY
AND HEALTH**



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- Specific to pool and bathing beach lifeguards, precautions shall be taken to prevent worker exposure to lightning by implementing a lightning safety plan that substantially complies with the principles established by the United States Lifeguard Association's (USLA), Reference Guideline 006, "Lightning Safety," approved April 28, 2012. Industry recognized publications recommend that lightning safety plan procedures designate a "weather watcher," whose responsibility is to "watch" the weather and provide for the regular monitoring of weather conditions and facilitate timely discontinuance of lifeguard activities in the event of deteriorating conditions.
- Prior to beginning any outdoor work, employers should check NOAA weather reports (weather.gov) and other sources of forecasts such as weather apps for all weather hazards in the immediate area.
- Lightning is unpredictable and can strike up to several miles from its parent thunderstorm. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), most lightning victims are not struck during the worst of a thunderstorm but rather before or after the storm reaches its greatest intensity.
- Employers must ensure that outdoor workers are effectively supervised while on-duty and that the employer's "weather watcher" and lightning safety procedures are being followed. Employers must also ensure that when weather hazards arise, they can be easily communicated to their employees.