

Things that can Injure from Above; Lightning & Pine Cone Safety



Lightening Safety - When thunder roars, go indoors!

- Summer is the most dangerous season for lightning with most lightning fatalities occurring in June, July, and August.
- Lightning is a dangerous natural force. Annually in the United States, cloud-to-ground lightning occurs 20 to 25 million times and over 300 people are struck by lightning. During the past 30 years, about 50 people, on average, have been killed by lightning strikes every year, and many more suffer permanent disabilities.
- Earlier this August a man was struck by lightning while hiking in Truckee CA on Donner Summit. The nearest storm was 50 miles away in Reno, NV. He survived, but with injuries.
- It is not often that lightening hits a body of water, but when it does the electricity spreads out over the water; the water acting as a conductor. When this occurs, whatever is in or on the surface of the water is effected by the electrical strike; fish, boats, people, etc.

When You Hear Thunder:

- Immediately head to a fully enclosed building with electricity and/or plumbing or to a hard topped vehicle.
 - o Dugouts, picnic shelter, and open garages are NOT safe.
- Once inside, close all windows and do not touch electrical equipment or plumbing.
 - o Try to stay away from windows. Lightning can leak in corners.
- Don't take a shower or bath during a thunderstorm.

What if I'm Far from a Safe Place?

- Avoid open fields, top of hills, ridge tops, tall isolated trees, and other tall objects.
- If in an open field, crouch low the ground in a ball like position. Minimize you contact with the ground and stay on the balls of your feet. Do NOT lie down.
- If in a forest, stay near a lower stand of trees.
- If in a group, spread out to avoid the electrical current traveling between group members.
- Stay away from water, wet items such as ropes, and metal objects such as fences and poles.

Preventative measures:

- Check the weather forecast before leaving for outdoor activities.
- Many mobile phone apps are available for lightning tracking. These apps alert you when lightning is nearby, allowing you the best opportunity to head to safety sooner rather than later!

Pine Cone Safety



Pine Cones are normally safe but in late summer and fall in Tahoe, they can become like rock grenades that can fall from the sky, causing mild to severe injuries, and even in some cases death.

In the late summer and fall in Lake Tahoe, pine cones begin to grow their seeds (aka pine nuts). This process creates a rock-hard pine cone that can fall from the tree's limb at any given time. Wind and animals can assist in the release of a pine cone from a limb, however they often drop without notice.

- Maintain extreme awareness when under trees, specifically Jeffery Pine trees, and Sugar Pine trees, as their cones are some of the largest in our local area. We have several Jeffery Pine trees on the WSC property as well as throughout the HMR Mountain.
- **Preventative measures:**
 - With proper maintenance, many pine cone injuries can be avoided:
 - Metal Belts for Trees
 - Wrap metal belts around the trunk of the tree to alleviate squirrels and other animals from climbing on the tree and shaking the pine cones loose.
 - Removal
 - Many local tree companies specialize in pine cone removal. With regular maintenance, (bi-annual) this can alleviate the problem all together.

Look up at the sky often, maintain awareness of your surroundings while outdoors, and stay safe!

Safety performance isn't
reflected in what we **did**.

It's reflected in
what we're **doing**.