



Safe Rowing Note

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| Subject | Lightning | | |
| Note number | 9 | Version | 1 |
| Date | 30 September 2024 | | |

Hazard Context

Lightening strikes can kill.

Lightning strikes can travel large distances in air, in the ground, and especially through water.

Proximity to water is a common factor in lightning strikes.

Rowers are particularly vulnerable as they are often in wide open spaces.

People struck by lightning are generally hit before and after the peak of the storm.

Lightning can be conducted, in a building, by aerials, piping or other wires.

A lightning strike is not usually instantly fatal, a victim's heart and/or breathing may stop. Early use of CPR may well save their life.

Safety Rules

Check the weather forecast – if lightning is forecast then find an indoor activity, do not row.

Crews should follow the British Rowing Safety Alert advice which refers to the RoSPA 30/30 Rule:

'The 30/30 rule provides a good way of ensuring one is sheltering during the most risky parts of the storm. It proposes that if the flash to bang is 30 seconds in length or less you should seek shelter.'

Staying inside this shelter is advised until 30 minutes past the last clap of thunder. This ensures that any distant strikes at the beginning of the storm (lightning can travel up to 10 miles), or trailing storm clouds at the back of the storm do not take anyone by surprise.'

<https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Safety-Alert-Lightning-August-2020.pdf>.

If you hear thunder or see lightning while rowing, then get off the water as soon as possible.

Find shelter inside a large building or a motor vehicle.

Do not shelter beneath tall or isolated trees.

Except in cases of emergency, do not use any type of telephone until the storm is over.

Call the emergency services if someone is hit; they will need urgent help.

Take Care – Lightning can be deadly but is easily avoided.