

Environmental, Health & Safety News

Emergency Action Plans/Spring Weather

Spring time is that time of the year for April showers and May flowers and also the start of the severe thunder storm and tornado season in the Midwest.

Did you know that a single stroke of lightning can carry 125,000,000 volts of electricity? And that more than 1000 people are injured by lightning in the United States each year?

Have you discussed the emergency action plan for severe weather events at your location? Do all employees know and understand the emergency action plan for your facility?

Do you know what action to take when severe weather occurs when you are not a work? Consider these safety tips when you see lightning:

Seek Shelter

- For every 5 seconds you count, lightning is one mile away
- The safest location during lightning activity is in an enclosed building
- If outside, seek shelter in a ditch, cave, or canyon
- If you are in a wooded area seek shelter in an area of shorter trees and crouch down away from the tree trunks
- Stay off of and away from anything tall
- Never use metal objects outside during lightning, such as tools or golf clubs

Stay in Your Vehicle

- If you are traveling and no external shelters are present, do not exit your vehicle
- The second safest location to be during lightning activity is in a fully enclosed hard topped car, truck, etc.
- Make sure all doors are closed and windows rolled up
- Do not touch any metal parts of your vehicle
- Be sure to stop and park the vehicle (a lightning strike or nearby flash may startle you and cause temporary blindness)

- Refrain from using the radio and cell phone during a lightning storm

Lightning Strikes

- If you feel your skin tingling or your hair stands on end, a lightning strike may be about to happen, crouch down or take cover immediately
- Get as low to the ground as possible, but do not lay down
- Crouch down on the balls of your feet with your feet together, hands over your head, and head down
- If someone is struck by lightning start CPR immediately
- There is no danger to anyone helping a person who has been struck, no electrical charge remains

Spring is also the start of the golfing and other outdoor activities. When weather looks threatening remember to put safety first. Before heading out for recreational events, check the radio or television for storm watch or warning notices in the area.

The National Weather Service issues a **severe thunderstorm watch** when conditions favor the development of severe thunderstorms. These storms can produce hail, high winds, dangerous lightning and possible tornadoes.

The **severe thunderstorm warning** means a severe thunderstorm has been reported or detected by radar. If the warning has been issued for your area, take shelter indoors and stay tuned to weather reports.

Now would be a great time to review the **emergency action plan** for severe weather at your location!

This month's Topic used information from AARP and Caterpillar Safety

Zero injuries in April will make us proud of our safety record in May!

Words of Wisdom!

"The way a team plays as a whole determines its success. You may have the greatest bunch of individual stars in the world, but if they don't play together, the club won't be worth a dime."

- Babe Ruth



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We're Proud of Our Work

**Safety is never an accident:
 it is always the result of
 high intention, sincere ef-
 fort, intelligent direction
 and skillful execution! It
 represents the wise choice
 of many alternatives!!**

**The Importance of Good Accident
 Reports**
The Brick Accident

Dear Sir:

I am writing in response to your request for additional information. In Block #3 of the accident reporting form, I put "Poor Planning" as the cause of my accident. You asked for a fuller explanation and I trust the following details will be sufficient.

I am a bricklayer by trade. On the day of the accident, I was working alone on the roof of a new six-story building. When I completed my work, I found I had some bricks left over which weighed approximately 240 lbs. Rather than carry the bricks down by hand, I decided to lower them in a barrel by using a pulley which was fortunately attached to the side of the building at the sixth floor.

Securing the rope at ground level, I went up to the roof, swung the barrel out and loaded the bricks into it. Then I went down and untied the rope, holding it tightly to insure a slow descent of the 240 lbs of bricks. You will note on the accident reporting form that my weight is 135 lbs.

Due to my surprise at being jerked off the ground so suddenly, I lost my presence of mind and forgot to let go of the rope. Needless to say, I proceeded at a rapid rate up the side of the building.

In the vicinity of the third floor, I met the barrel which was now proceeding downward at an equally impressive speed.

Location: _____

Supervisor: _____

please sign below, confirming the material was reviewed:

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This explains the fractured skull, minor abrasions, and the broken collarbone as listed in Section 3 of the accident reporting form.

Slowed only slightly, I continued my rapid ascent, not stopping until the fingers of my right hand were two knuckles deep into the pulley which I mentioned in Paragraph 2 of this correspondence. Fortunately, by this time I had regained my presence of mind and was able to hold tightly to the rope, in spite of the excruciating pain I was now experiencing.

At approximately the same time, however, the barrel of bricks hit the ground and the bottom fell out of the barrel. Now devoid of the weight of the bricks, the barrel weighed approximately 50 lbs. I refer you again to my weight. As you might imagine, I began a rapid descent down the side of the building.

In the vicinity of the third floor, I met the barrel coming up. This accounts for the two fractured ankles, broken tooth, and severe lacerations of my legs and lower body. Here my luck began to change slightly. The encounter with the barrel seemed to slow me enough to lessen my injuries when I fell onto the pile of bricks and fortunately only three vertebrae were cracked.

I am sorry to report, however, as I lay there on the pile of bricks, in pain, unable to move, and watching the empty barrel six stories above me, I again lost my composure and presence of mind and let go of the rope.



My thanks to an AGC of Indiana Safety Bulletin for this article.