PROTECT YOURSELF
BEFORE LIGHTNING STRIKES

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The old notion that lightning never strikes the same spot twice is a case of wishful thinking. The fact is, lightning kills in certain areas with alarming predictability. You can protect yourself by knowing what to do during a storm.

Lightning tends to strike high places — for example, the Empire State building is struck about 40 times a year! Therefore, you shouldn’t stand under trees during a lightning storm. Seventeen percent of deaths from lightning occur under trees.

Standing in wide open places are dangerous as well. Thirty-one percent of deaths from lightning occur on golf courses and in open fields. It is actually safer to stand under a group of trees shorter than others in the area, rather than out in the open. Lightning will more likely strike the taller trees in the area.

It is also important to stay off the water when lightning is near. Twelve percent of deaths from lightning occur when people are out boating or fishing. In June of 1993, two men were struck by lightning while they were fishing on Lake Independence.

“They had been fishing for about an hour when Mr. Reinken cast his fishing rod for the last time. The lightning struck the rod’s tip and entered Reinken’s right palm and exited his right foot.”

“Dr. John Twomey, director of Hennepin County’s burn unit said the two men didn’t do anything dumb. He said the clouds had already passed. He said they were caught in a phenomenon in which lightning struck although dark clouds were not overhead.” (Star Tribune — June 9, 1993)

Even though there were no dark clouds directly above the two fisherman, they were struck by lightning from a storm in the distance. Take note that lightning can strike close to ten miles from the parent cloud.

WHAT TO DO WHEN LIGHTNING IS NEAR

Standing in the open with a metal object is a deadly combination when lightning is nearby. That is why the golf course is an especially dangerous place to be during a lightning storm.

When lightning is nearby, it is always time to stop your golf game. Professional golfers Jerry Heard and Lee Trevino were both struck by lightning on the 13th fairway at Butler National Golf Club.

Heard, who had won four PGA tournaments and was on the fast track to become the game’s next big star was taken out of the running in an instant.

Remember, no matter how good your game is going, it is never worth it to remain on the course while lightning is nearby.

But if you do find yourself far from the clubhouse when a storm is brewing, take the following precautions to ensure that you don’t become a human lightning rod:

• Drop the golf clubs and the umbrella! These are metal objects which are often pointed skyward, just inviting lightning to strike. It is better to get wet than to attract a deadly lightning bolt.

• Take off metal-spiked golf shoes. Again, metal is a conductor of electricity.

• Seek low ground if you are in an open area. Lightning will strike on top of a hill before a lower-lying valley. Curl up on your side, the smaller target you are, the better. Lying on a rubber or plastic raincoat provides insulation.

• Be aware of the signs. Anytime you feel the hair on your head, neck or arms stand on end, lightning may be about to strike. Immediately drop to the ground and curl up on your side.

PROTECT YOUR PATRONS

Believe it or not, electrical storms kill 300 to 600 people in the United States each year, and they injure thousands more. Unfortunately the majority of these deaths and injuries occur on golf courses and in other open areas.

But golf course owners are not helpless to protect (Continued on Page 12)
Lightning —
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patrons of their courses. Some private weather forecasting companies offer a service called lightning detection, which allows them to track lightning with unprecedented accuracy.

Some companies offer a paging system to warn owners when storms are headed toward their course. This gives owners time to warn golfers and get them off the course when lightning is nearby.

Although you can’t control the dangers of severe summer weather, using a private weather forecasting service is one way to help lessen the risk of a death or injury on your course when Mother Nature is at her worst.

Harold Stodola

Clarence Larson. Finally he has revamped Columbia Golf Course in play, and do his members ever love it.

John Lightfoot, Cloquet. Small in stature but big in ideas and the ability to carry them out.

Jim Lindbald. As up to date as his modern championship. Rolling Green.

His brother, Don, is at Majestic Oaks and they say it is a Majestic layout.

Bill Lundquist, serious veteran at Forest Hills.

Orland Mann. Must be lonesome at women-less Olympic Hills.

Busy Tony Magina. Have hardly seen his handsome sideburns this summer.

Walter Mann, Mendota Short Course. It has never been so good.

Clem McNitt, with a smile as big as his spreading Coon Rapids Course.

His son owns a closely operated course in neighboring Dayton.

Dick McCurry, assistant at Interlachen. Best amateur bartender I know. Very steady on his trips.

The Horis’ — father and son, at Tartan Park. What a layout. What a job they are doing.

Newly married Larry Mueller at Minnesota Valley. Snowmold never phased him when he returned from his honeymoon.

Harold Murphy. So diversified he should be able to retire to his Wisconsin cabin at fifty.

Spencer Nelson. Little Falls in the summer. California or Florida in the winter.

Couldn’t happen to a nicer guy.

Tall Irv Novak. All we hear about Austin Country Club in the Twin Cities is praise.

George Ostler. Quiet, calculating, far-seeing Superintendent at Hillcrest. Course is immaculate.

Jerry Parisek, Lost Spur. Doesn’t say much, but thinks and produces a lot.

Cal Puleman and son in South Dakota. Keep maintenance standards high in their state.

Dick Wise, Detroit Lakes. Up where the fishing and hunting are best. So is his golf course.

John Queensland, Cedar River Country Club, Adams. Young, enthusiastic; anxious to learn how to do the best for his club.


Keith Scott. Just as polished as superb Oak Ridge. They both have class.

Bill Streeter, Orono. We miss you at our meetings.

Charles Suter, Highland. How does it feel to have another nine added to your course.

Dick Ulrich, Lafayette. Happy in his new job and loves his course.

Dick Toupal at well designed North Oaks. What a pleasure it must be to belong to his honeycomb.

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Larry Vetter. Golfer, superintendent and promoter for bigger and better association through education.

Cliff Vons, St. Cloud Country Club. His work is tops just like his Cadillac.

Dick Weise, Detroit Lakes. Up where the fishing and hunting are best. So is his golf course.

Jim Wodash, Albert Lea. Father of large family. Father of interesting golf course.

Arthur Yanke. Phalen. Perhaps retired by now. He earned it.

Bennie Zimmer, our longtime Secretary. Is overdue for a fine club which he deserves.

What a pleasure it is to see our golf courses in such fine hands.

Ye Olde Greenkeeper,
Harold Stodola