

# Department-of Disease Control

## Weekly Disease Forecast No.19/2021\_Lightning Strike Injuries (16 – 22 May 2021)

From the Department of Disease Control's injury surveillance system in 33 hospitals, it was found that last year (2020) there were 29 injured persons and 5 deaths. This year up to the present, there were 5 injured persons and 1 death from lightning strike injuries. Last month (April), 5 people aged 7 to 77 years (31 male and 9 female) were the incident's victims. The surveillance also showed that lightning strike injuries occurred mostly when those victims were under tall trees, in open shelters such as rice field bamboo huts and in open spaces. Most of the incidents occurred in the Northeastern region of the country. Most were farmers.

Lightning strike injuries mostly occurred in the early period of the raining season in the Northeastern region (21 victims). Provinces with the highest number of victims were Surin and Sakon Nakhon (4 each), followed by Songkhla, Mae Hong Son, and Rayong (3 each), Amnat Charoen, Mukdahan, Surat Thani, and Nakhon Si Thammarat (2 each). The most common places of lightning strike were agricultural fields.

This week disease forecast reveals a continue trend of lightning strike injuries as summer thunderstorms often occur during March to May, according to the Meteorological Department, and usually cause thundery rains, strong winds and lightning strikes.



The Department of Disease Control (DDC), therefore, warns farmers that when being in the fields, do not wear clothes with metal buttons or belt buckles. If being caught in open spaces such as rice fields during thunderstorms, mobile phones must be turned off. Do not touch metal equipment and water. Do not stay under tall trees and unstable buildings but should rapidly seek strong shelters such as houses or buildings and stay away from any metal surfaces that conduct electricity.

The DDC also advises people to follow the 30-30 lightning strike self-protection rule as follows, i.e. if being in open spaces, near tall structures or equipment that conduct electricity when lightning occurs followed by thunder within 30 seconds, immediately find safe enclosed shelters such as houses, offices, shopping centers, and hard-top vehicles with the windows rolled up. Remain in shelters for 30 minutes after the last thunder.

If being caught in open spaces such as rice fields, parks, playgrounds, golf courses, golf carts, motorcycles, ponds, lakes, swimming pools, and beaches, crouch down in a ball-like position (feet and knees together) with head tucked and hands over ears so that to be down low with minimal contact with the ground. **Do NOT lie down.** Lightning causes electric currents along the top of the ground that can be deadly over 100 feet away. Crouching down is the best combination of being low and touching the ground as little as possible. Staying in a car with all the doors and windows rolled up without touching any metal surfaces that conduct electricity is safe. All mobile phones and electronic devices must be turned off during thunderstorms.

If a lightning strike victim is found, immediately call Emergency Medical Service (EMS) 1669 for help. First aid given, including resuscitation and CPR, while waiting professional medical attention can save lives.

For queries or additional information, please call DDC hotline 1422.

