

Operating Guideline # 226

Adverse Weather - Lightning

September 29, 2019



PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Operating Guideline (OG) is to establish work guidelines for conducting outdoor operations during lightning storms.

ISSUE/RATIONALE:

Lightning storms can present electrocution hazards to firefighters exposed to the elements and lightning strikes can occur within 16 kilometers of a storm.

GUIDLINE:

1. Adverse or severe weather conditions including lightning storms can present a danger to firefighters operating at emergency incidents or who may be conducting training or other activities out-of-doors.
2. When adverse weather of any sort threatens, training and fire prevention activities scheduled to be conducted out-of-doors should be suspended and staff should take cover inside a suitable building or vehicle until the threat of severe weather passes.
3. When adverse weather – and particularly lightning – threatens to occur in an area where emergency operations are being conducted, staff should avoid raising or lowering ground and aerial ladders, and lighting masts. Where a storm suddenly develops, staff should be removed from ladders and aerial devices until the storm passes and should not operate any equipment that might serve to attract a lightning strike. Incident Commanders should consider suspending operations all-together if the situation warrants.
4. Pump operators and all non-essential personnel should seek shelter in the cab of the apparatus during adverse weather and only the minimum number of personnel required to perform essential tasks should be exposed to the weather, and only where it is safe for them to remain so exposed.
5. Where possible, communications will notify the Incident Commander of the approach of adverse weather.

RESPONSIBILITY:

It is the responsibility of all members to comply with the provisions of this OG and particularly that Company Officers (supervisors), and firefighters or other staff (workers) ensure that they adhere to their duties in accordance with the provisions of this document and the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

REFERENCES:

- Occupational Health and Safety Act (RSO 1990, c. 0.1)
- Section 21 Committee Guidance Note GN 6-8, Firefighter Safety During Lightning Storms