



Washington State Patrol

STATE FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

Serving Washington Since 1901

*****For Immediate Release*****

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Government and Media Relations

State Fire Marshal's Office
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Lightning Safety

Olympia - Lightning-caused fire incidents and injuries are a consistent seasonal concern in many areas of the United States. According to the National Interagency Fire Center, there were 5,883 wildfires ignited by lightning strikes in 2023, with 882 of those occurring within the Northwest Region of the country. The National Weather Service reports an average of 20 fatal lightning strikes and hundreds of injuries annually.

The State Fire Marshal's Office urges residents to take the following safety precautions during lightning storms:

- Get indoors and stay inside, if possible.
- If you are outside and hear thunder, seek shelter. If you are unable to seek shelter, avoid open spaces.
- If caught outside in a group, spread out and avoid tall objects.
- Avoid using or being near water.
- Do not use or unplug electronics.
- Stay away from windows, doors, and porches.
- If you feel your hair stand on end, crouch down in a ball-like position with your feet together, minimizing contact with the ground. Do not lie flat, as this increases your risk of being affected by potential ground currents from a nearby lightning strike.
- After the lightning storm has passed, wait an additional 30 minutes before returning outdoors.
- If someone is struck by lightning or a fire starts, call 911.

For more information, contact the State Fire Marshal's Office at (360) 596-3904.

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The State Fire Marshal's Office is a Bureau of the Washington State Patrol, providing fire and life safety services to the citizens of Washington State. These services include public education, licensing and certification of the fire sprinkler, fireworks, and cigarette industries, data collection and analysis, fire and life safety inspections for state facilities, plan review of school construction projects, all-risk mobilization of statewide fire service resources, hazardous materials training, and the training and certification of firefighters.

www.wsp.wa.gov/state-fire-marshals-office/