

Summary of 2023 Fatal Lightning Incidents

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During 2023, the National Lightning Safety Council documented 13 lightning fatalities in the United States and its territories. The 13 fatalities were a result of 12 incidents which occurred on 12 different days. One of the lightning incidents (May 15th) led to two fatalities.

Fatalities occurred in 9 states. Florida led the nation with 4 fatalities followed by Texas with 2 fatalities. The remaining lightning deaths occurred in Virginia, Pennsylvania, Nebraska, New York, Oklahoma, Alabama, and Kentucky.

As is typically the case, the majority of deaths were men (10 of 13). Ages of the victims ranged from 6 to 73. The monthly distribution of lightning deaths was a bit unusual with 3 deaths in April, 4 in May, 1 in June, 1 in July, 4 in August and 1 in September. Typically, June and July have the most lightning deaths.

Leisure-related activities led to 5 of the 13 deaths with 3 of those related to water activities, including fishing(1), boating(1), and swimming(1). The other two leisure-related fatal activities were hunting(1) and taking a work break outdoors(1).

Work-related activities led to 4 fatalities and included roofing (2), ranching(1), and farming(1).

The remaining 4 fatalities were attributed to the victims' normal daily routine and included walking home from the school bus stop (2), walking to/from a car, and driving (1) (tree toppled by lightning struck car).

Detailed information on the 2023 lightning fatalities, as well as information on all fatalities from 2006 through 2023, is available from the National Lightning Safety Council "Fatalities" webpage.

<http://lightningsafetycouncil.org/LSC-LightningFatalities.html>