

Volusia County Fire Services Safety Gram



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Thunderstorm Safety

During the fully developed stages of a thunderstorm, there may be notable events occurring on the ground such as a sudden reversal of wind direction, a noticeable rise in wind speed, and a sharp drop in temperature. A thunderstorm may produce heavy rain, hail, and lightning which occur only in its mature stages.

During a storm:

- Do not continue to drive when approaching a flooded roadway if you can not see the road.
- Stay in a crouched position in a low lying area in open fields with isolated trees, keeping twice as far away as the height of the trees.
- Find shelter when at an emergency scene in areas of hilltops, open spaces, wire fences, metal clothes lines, exposed sheds, transmitter lines and elevated objects.
- Avoid carrying or using long or metallic tools when working in open area.
- Seek shelter in the cab of the apparatus whenever it is possible.
- Drop to the ground immediately if feeling an electrical charge, if hair stands on end, or if skin tingles, as lightning is about to strike.
- Wear full PPE with helmet when hail is coming down.
- Stop all elevated operations during lightning conditions: no ground ladder and aerial devices.
- Stop all training!

Stay informed via NOAA Weather Radio and dispatched notifications. Observe weather conditions in the immediate area. Assure that the station has a NOAA Weather Radio and is in good working condition. Be alert when activation is noted.

Dispersion level Chart

Dispersion Range 0-40 is stable air, low fire intensity, less long range spotting.

Dispersion Range 41-70 is moderate unstable air, increased fire intensity and long range spotting.

Dispersion Range 70+ is unstable air, high amount of upper lifting, intense fire activity, potential for long range spotting and plume dominated wildfires.

Fire-line Handbook Jan.'98

Fight fire aggressively, but provide for safety first.
Initiate all action based on current and expected fire behavior.
Recognize current weather conditions and obtain forecasts.
Ensure instructions are given and understood.

Obtain current information on status.
Remain in communication with crewmembers, your supervisor, and adjoining forces.
Determine safety zones and escape routes.
Establish lookouts in potentially hazardous situations.
Remain in control at all times.
Stay alert, keep calm, act decisively.
NWCG Handbook 3