

Lightning strikes far more men than women, statistics show

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When it comes to lightning, females are cautious and males are reckless.

The result: Between 1995 and 2008, lightning killed 648 people, and of those, 82 percent were male, according to AccuWeather.com.

"Men take more risks in lightning storms," said John Jensenius, of the [National Weather Service](#), adding that males are less willing to walk away from [recreational activities](#) or sports.

Indeed, those pastimes are involved in almost half of all lightning-related deaths, according to Popular Science.

Florida sees more thunderstorms and lightning than anywhere else in the United States, with South Florida, Tampa Bay and the Interstate 4 corridor near Orlando tied for seeing the most bolts per year, the [weather service](#) said. For instance, Tampa Bay once recorded up to 50,000 flashes in June alone.

While there have been no local deaths this year, lightning has so far killed six people nationwide, all of them male. Among them: A 26 year-old-man, playing baseball in Ruby, S.C., on June 21, and a 49-year-old man, golfing in Shreveport, La., on June 7.

Since 1959, lightning has killed 94 people in Broward, Palm Beach and Miami-Dade counties, or an average of about two per year. On average, another 10 are injured each year. Most of the deaths, more than 70

percent, occurred during June, July and August.

In Central Florida, from Tampa Bay to Melbourne, more than 110 people were killed in the same time period. The last: A young man was killed in Melbourne Beach in July 2009, the weather service said.

On July 4, 2009, in Polk County, lightning struck in a field as a church group was in the middle of a soccer game and picnic. One man died, 18 were injured.

In July 2007, in Pinellas County, lightning struck a 16-year-old boy and his mother, while they were on Treasure Island Beach. The bolt hit the boy in the chest, knocking him unconscious. He died four days later. The mother was not seriously injured.

While no one was killed, last September a bolt struck a light post shortly after the start of a high school football game in Orange County, sending two people to the hospital and prompting a chaotic evacuation of the metal stands.

The most recent South Florida lightning deaths: A 37-year-old man was struck while standing in a 14-foot aluminum boat in Biscayne Bay in Miami in September 2009. In June 2009, landscaper Dessalines Oleus, 53, of Pompano Beach, was struck as he was mowing a lawn in Coral Springs.

In August 2003, two Palm Beach County men were struck on the same day at their homes, one in Delray Beach as he trimmed his lawn and the other in his driveway near Boca Raton.

Statewide, lightning kills an average of 10 people and injures an additional 30 per year. Only rip currents are a more prolific weather-related killer, claiming 20 to 25 lives per year statewide.

Those ages 10-19 are struck more than any other age group, as school is out and children frequently play outside, the weather service said.

The last person to be struck in South Florida was Joseph Guerrero, then 17, who was fishing on the bank of a lake near Lake Worth in August 2010. He has since recovered.

Lightning is expected to flash most afternoons this week across the state, with the weather service predicting a 40-60 percent chance of storms through Friday.

Forecasters stress thunderstorms can shoot lightning up to 10 miles from their cores, even into areas where there might not be rain.

"The common perception is [lightning](#) happens only when it's really dark and stormy out," said meteorologist Robert Molleda. "But lighting can travel a pretty good distance from where the rain is falling."

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