



Public Safety Newsletter

St. Olaf College

July 1, 2009

Volume 1, Issue 3

This Month:

- Lightning
- Fireworks Safety
- Good Samaritan Law
- Bicycle Theft

Do you have a question or concern you would like to see addressed in a future newsletter?

E-Mail us at:
dpsnews@stolaf.edu

24-Hour Public Safety Dispatch:
On-Campus: 3666
Off-Campus: (507)-786-3666

Police, Fire & Ambulance 9-911
(Emergency)

Northfield Police 9-645-4477
(Non-Emergency)

Other Important Numbers:

Counseling Center	3062
Dean of Students	3023
Health Services	3063
Parking Office	2972
Safe Ride	3666
Sexual Assault Resource Network (SARN)	3777
Hope Center	1-800-607-2330

Top 10 Myths of Lightning Safety

MYTH: Lightning never strikes the same place twice.

TRUTH: Lightning often strikes the same place repeatedly, especially if it's a tall pointy isolated object. The Empire State Building used to be a lightning laboratory, since it is hit nearly 25 times a year.

MYTH: If it's not raining, or if clouds aren't overhead, I'm safe from lightning.

TRUTH: Lightning often strikes more than three miles from the thunderstorm, far outside the rain or even thunderstorm cloud. While infrequent, there have been recorded strikes more than 50 miles from the thunderstorm.

MYTH: Rubber tires protect you from lightning in a car by insulating you from the ground.

TRUTH: Most cars are reasonably safe from lightning, BUT it's the metal roof and metal sides that protect you, not the rubber tires.

MYTH: A lightning victim is electrified. If you touch them, you'll be electrocuted.

TRUTH: The human body does not store electricity. It is perfectly safe to touch a lightning victim to give them first aid.

MYTH: If outside during a thunderstorm, go under a tree to stay dry.

TRUTH: Being underneath trees is the second leading activity for lightning casualties—enough said?!

MYTH: I'm in a house—I'm safe from lightning.

TRUTH: While a house is a good place for lightning safety, just going inside isn't enough. You must avoid any conducting paths leading outside, such as corded telephones, electrical appliances, wires, TV cables, plumbing (including plastic pipes with water in them), metal doors or window frames, etc. Don't stand near a window to watch the lightning. An inside room is generally best.

MYTH: When playing sports and thunderstorms threaten, it's okay to finish the game before seeking shelter.

TRUTH: Sports is the activity with the fastest rising rate of lightning casualties. Seek proper shelter immediately when lightning threatens.

MYTH: Structures with metal, or metal on the body (jewelry, watches, glasses, backpacks, etc.) attract lightning.

TRUTH: Height, pointy shape, and isolation are the dominant factors controlling where a lightning bolt will strike. While metal doesn't attract lightning, touching or being near long metal objects is still unsafe.

MYTH: If trapped outside and lightning is about to strike, lie flat on the ground.

TRUTH: Better advice is to use the 'Lightning Crouch': put your feet together, squat low, tuck your head and cover your ears. While lying flat on the ground gets you as low as possible, which is good, it also increases your chances to be hit by a ground current, which is bad.

MYTH: Go near a tall pointy isolated object when thunderstorms threaten, to be within the 45 degree "cone of protection".

TRUTH: While tall pointy isolated objects are statistically more likely to be struck, it's not reliable enough for safety. Besides, the lightning electricity will likely spread out along the surface of the ground and can still kill someone standing over 100 feet from the "protecting" object. Also, if you are close to or touching the tall object, you can be electrocuted via side flash or contact voltage.

NO place *outside* is safe in/near a thunderstorm.

For more information, check out:
<http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov/>



Fireworks Safety

Picnics, parades and fireworks certainly all signify that summer is here. Speaking of fireworks, do you know that pets, especially dogs, are very sensitive to the booms and bangs associated with a fireworks display? While they are certainly part of the family, consider leaving your four-legged friend at home if you're heading out to view a local display.



Fireworks can also turn a joyful time into a painful one when someone is injured. According to the U.S Consumer Product Safety Commission, there were approximately 9,800 reported fireworks related injuries in 2007 treated in emergency rooms—2,600 of those injuries were to children under the age of fourteen. More than half of the injuries suffered were burns, mostly to the hands, eyes and legs.

To help celebrate this Fourth of July safely, here are a few tips to keep in mind if lighting your own (legal) display:

- ❖ Never allow children to play with or ignite fireworks.
- ❖ Read and follow all warnings and instructions
- ❖ Be sure other people are out of range before lighting fireworks.
- ❖ Only light fireworks on a smooth, flat surface away from the house, dry leaves and flammable materials.
- ❖ Never try to re-light fireworks that have not fully functioned.
- ❖ Keep a bucket of water (or hose) handy in case of a malfunction or fire.

Duty to Act: Good Samaritan Law

Good Samaritan laws take their name from a story in the Bible, which recounts the aid given by a traveler to a person in need who had been beaten and robbed by bandits. While this traveler (a Samaritan) had no national, cultural, or religious affiliation to the injured man, in compassion he aided the injured man, and did all in his power to ensure his welfare and recovery.

Good Samaritan laws in the United States are laws or acts protecting from liability those who choose to aid others who are injured or ill. They are intended to reduce bystanders' hesitation to assist, for fear of being sued or prosecuted for unintentional injury or wrongful death. Good Samaritan laws vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, and generally do not apply to medical professionals' or career emergency responders' on-the-job conduct, but some extend protection to professional rescuers when they are acting in a volunteer capacity.

The Good Samaritan statutes in Minnesota do require a person at the scene of an emergency to provide reasonable assistance to a person in need. This assistance may be simply to call 911 (or on campus, Public Safety at x3666). Violation of the duty to assist subdivision is a petty misdemeanor in Minnesota. Also, if a responder begins rendering aid, he must not leave the scene until it is necessary to call for needed medical assistance, a rescuer of equal or higher ability takes over, or continuing to give aid is unsafe. The responder is not legally liable for the death, disfigurement or disability of the victim as long as the responder acted rationally, in good faith and in accordance with their level of training.

Important Dates for July:

July 4	Independence Day
July 9	Summer Session I Ends
July 13	Summer Session II Begins



Did you know?

During the 2008-2009 Academic Year, Public Safety Officers took thirty-nine stolen bicycle reports, totaling \$10,290.00 in personal loss. Of the bikes reported stolen, only nine were recovered (\$1,890.00). Many of the bikes taken were not locked or secured to a bike rack, but just placed in a rack to 'look' like they were secure. Bike theft is a crime of opportunity. While any lock is better than nothing, Public Safety recommends the Kryptonite/U-Locks to be the best kind to use to secure your property.

Please visit our web sites at:
<http://www.stolaf.edu/stulife/safety>
<http://www.stolaf.edu/stulife/parking>

Mission Statement

Department of Public Safety

St. Olaf College

The mission of the Public Safety Department is:



"To support and advance the educational objectives of St. Olaf College by fostering and maintaining a safe, secure and stable environment for living, learning, and working."