



Hazard Alert

Use of telephones during thunderstorms

The Occupational Health & Safety Unit has received enquiries regarding the use of telephones during thunderstorms. During a recent severe storm, some university buildings were hit by lightning. In previous storms, the University's voice-mail system has been damaged by a lightning strike.

Supervisors and staff should note that phone calls made or received on land-lines should be kept to emergency calls only during thunderstorms. Calls from mobile phones are not considered dangerous.

Energex have released the following information and recommendations for the use of **land-lines** during thunderstorms:

“You may suffer an injury from using your phone or other electrical equipment during a thunderstorm. In extreme cases this may be fatal. You should not use your phone during a thunderstorm. If you must use your phone during a thunderstorm because of an emergency, then to reduce this risk:

- keep the call as brief as possible
- do not touch electrical appliances or metal fixtures
- do not stand in bare feet on uncovered concrete floors
- do not touch brick or concrete walls”

If you must make an **emergency** call during a thunderstorm, use the hands free device if provided or a mobile phone if available. Make the call as brief as possible, remembering that the person at the other end may be required to use a telephone handset.

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