

## *Safety Guru - Summer 2017*

### Safety Checkup for Spring/Summer

It's that time again. Warmer temps, green grass light breezes and oh yeah – Thunderstorms, High Winds, Tornadoes, Insects, floods and people wandering into our jobsites or facilities....

Just like the colder time of year, spring and summer bring their own safety issues. Warming temps spur the growth of bugs including ticks and spiders. Most wastewater plants have some grassy areas that are adjacent to fields or wooded areas which make it a prime spot to encounter ticks. There are a lot of good sites including the MN DNR sites that have volumes of information about dealing with ticks, spiders and other biting insects. Make sure you check yourself over after being in tall grass or near wooded areas to ensure you don't have any of those little invaders attaching themselves to you.

The warming air moving into cooler air masses create rapidly changing conditions. Thunder and Lightning often give you some advance warning that a storm is approaching. Take a little time to review your work situations to determine where you may go to seek shelter in your facilities or when you are out in the field. Low places may give you some reduced risk of lightning, but may be subject to flooding. Our recent weather patterns seem to be producing some heavy rain events that often can cause short term flooding to occur. If you happen to be working in a sewer (storm or sanitary) large amounts of water can enter the lines and cause surcharging of the lines and manholes which could entrap workers. Be aware of any potential impact the weather may have on your activities and keep a watch for those changing conditions.

The lightning side of storms can produce a wide range of issues. From immediate electrocution to burns from close encounters to loss or damage to controls or equipment from the actual strikes. Down power lines, shorted out lines in conduits near strikes and loss of process control or monitoring can occur from lightning strikes. Be very cautious when working in areas that have had a strike or may have been impacted by lightning as sometimes damage or dangers are not readily recognized. Burning insulation smells, dim lights, blank screens and many more things can result from power losses due to lightning. Extra current in power lines can do some pretty amazing things to controls and electrical equipment. I had heard that one operator had been in an MCC during a storm had one of the MCC panels blow out a few feet away.

Keep those questions and comments coming. Keep safety at the top of the list – on and off the job!

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