

FortisAlberta advises customers to be safe during lightning season

Lightning season has begun, and will run its course until September. In 2015, FortisAlberta recorded more than 185,000 strikes for 54 of its major service points. FortisAlberta, your electric distribution provider, has more than 126,000 kilometres of mostly overhead power lines that can be affected by lightning strikes and create power outages.

Recent analysis of our service territory shows that there are hot spots for lightning strikes all over the province. As such, we have collected a top 10 list for lightning strikes in our service territory which is based on the number of strikes per square kilometre.

“The lightning hot spots vary every year depending on the location and weather patterns occurring that year,” says Jen Cain, Communications Advisor, FortisAlberta. “Ensure you know what to do to stay safe in the event you get caught in a storm.”

FortisAlberta’s top 10 lightning hot spots, with approximate strikes are:

1. **Sedgewick** – 2.19 strikes per square kilometre (total 6,568 strikes)
2. **Camrose** – 2.16 strikes per square kilometre (total 9,313 strikes)
3. **Redwater** – 2.12 strikes per square kilometre (total 3,083 strikes)
4. **Fort Saskatchewan** – 2.03 strikes per square kilometre (total 4,034 strikes)
5. **Strathmore** – 1.90 strikes per square kilometer (total 8,630 strikes)
6. **Wainwright** – 1.67 strikes per square kilometre (total 7,620 strikes)
7. **Sherwood Park** – 1.65 strikes per square kilometre (total 3,249 strikes)
8. **Lacombe** – 1.61 strikes per square kilometre (total 5,289 strikes)
9. **Edson** – 1.57 strikes per square kilometre (total 10,796 strikes)
10. **Vulcan** – 1.52 strikes per square kilometre (total 5,411 strikes)

Lightning Safety Tips:**1. Prepare your electrical property:**

- Before the storm hits, disconnect electronics and electrical appliances including radios and television sets.

2. Stay safe indoors:

- Remain indoors if possible.
- Keep away from doors, windows, fireplaces and anything that will conduct electricity such as radiators, stoves, sinks and metal pipes.
- Only use battery-operated appliances. Don’t handle electrical equipment or telephones. Cell phones are the safest method of communication.

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3. Take precautions if caught outdoors:

- Take shelter when you can count 30 seconds or less between lightning and thunder.
- Stay away from objects that conduct electricity, like water, tractors, golf clubs and carts, motorcycles, lawn mowers and bicycles.
- Avoid being the highest point in an open area, crouch down and cover your ears.
- Stay away from tall objects like trees, hilltops and poles.

For more information on staying safe during a lightning storm, visit: www.fortisalberta.com/safety

As an owner and operator of more than 60 per cent of Alberta's total electric distribution network and more than 126,000 kilometres of power lines, FortisAlberta's focus is the safe and reliable delivery of electricity to its 530,000 customers in 200 growing communities across Alberta.

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