

TSAR TIMES and TOPICS



Tidewater Search & Rescue

www.TSAR.org

TSAR member makes 'find' in JCC search— Theresa Crossland

At a recent search in James City County, I had the pleasure of doing a sign cutting task with a tracker. I love working with trackers. Most of them have a warped sense of humor, but more than that, they are for the most part the most patient people I have ever met. And this one, Roy Hutchinson, was no exception to that rule. I'm sure I tried his patience more than a little bit with all my questions. But, Roy took it all in stride, answering all my questions, checking all the little things I wasn't sure about, showing me all the things I didn't even see. However, one moment stands out in my memory. I had walked off the path we were on because I saw something white out a little ways in the woods. Of course, when I got to it, I realized it was nothing more than a piece of garbage. When I got back to Roy, I mumbled something along the lines of "sorry, it was nothing". Roy took it with his usual patience and explained that that was what we do, as he put it, "we look for what doesn't belong". I guess I had not heard it put like that before, and it really stuck with me.

That same day, on yet another task with Roy and two other SMRG members, I remembered those words. The subject we were looking for was reported as wearing all black. So, when I spotted a flash of purple in the woods up ahead of me, I wasn't thinking I had found anything, but of course we had to go check it out. As our team approached the area, imagine our surprise when it turned out to be our subject! Sitting there waiting on us! There are not enough words to describe how happy and excited I was. Again, it was a good thing Roy and the others were there with me. I was so excited I think I forgot everything I ever learned. However, that was an important lesson for me as well.

I don't know that I will ever have the patience it takes to be a sign cutter, but I will never pass up an opportunity to do a task with them. I always learn so much!! So, my thanks to all of you I have had the pleasure of working with already. And for all of you I haven't yet, I look forward to meeting you!!!

Land Nav course at First Landing—Theresa Crossland

As some of you already know, TSAR has been granted permission from First Landing State Park to put in our own orienteering course at the park. This is a great honor and we are deeply indebted to them for allowing it. A special thanks to Butch Burke who managed to not only get permission from the park, but who also has

made all the markers by himself and has even started installing them on his own. We really need for more people to help out with this project! Please contact Butch and let him know if you have some free time to help out with this! And don't forget to say "Thank You" to him!

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This newsletter is an internal publication of the Tidewater Search and Rescue Group Incorporated for the use of it's members. The views expressed here reflect the views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of TSAR, Inc.

JUNE TRAINING CALENDAR

- 13 1800-2130 Wilderness First Aid @ ARC Va. Bch
- 14 TSAR BOD Meeting
- 16 1700 SPCA Summer Solstice Celebration @ The View Va. Bch
- 18 1800-2130 Wilderness First Aid @ ARC Va. Bch
- 20 1800-2130 Wilderness First Aid @ ARC Va. Bch
- 21 1900-2100 TSAR Gen. Membership Mtg. @ TEMS
- 23 0900-1500 TSAR Training/Wilderness First Aid @ First Landing

People, if you intend on going to training, then please, please call Bill Schmelling . We decide IF we will have training based on the phone calls. If we decide to cancel the training then we can call those who called and make sure they know it is cancelled. If you don't call but decide to go, you can find yourself the only person in the parking lot. You need to call Bill Schmelling forty-eight hours before the scheduled training so we can decide whether or not it will be held.

VDEM TRAINING

FTS

June 29-July 1 (second week) Providence Forge

For more info and registration, log on to the website http://www.vaemergency.com/train/calendar_course.cfm?id=60

ICS 300

Jul. 17, 2007 - Jul. 18, 2007—Hampton Roads

Registration Deadline: Jun. 26, 2007

FEMA TRAINING

A link for the mandated FEMA training can be found on TSAR's website just click on training and news tab from the home page. All operational personnel must complete these courses.

For any additional information on the listed training's contact Bill Schmelling at tsar39@verizon.net.

Lightning Safety—Ann Muir

The Nation will celebrate its fourth annual National Lightning Safety Awareness Week, June 24-30, 2007.

(All information below obtained and reprinted with permission from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Weather Service's website: www.nws.noaa.gov)

What is a Safe Shelter?

A house or other substantial building offers the best protection from lightning. In assessing the safety provided by a particular structure, it is more important to consider what happens if the structure gets struck by lightning, rather than whether the structure will be hit by lightning. For a shelter to provide protection from lightning, it must contain a mechanism for conducting the electrical current from the point of contact to the ground. These mechanisms may be on the outside of the structure, may be contained within the walls of the structure, or may be a combination of the two. On the outside, lightning can travel along the outer shell of the building or may follow metal gutters and downspouts to the ground. Inside a structure, lightning can

follow conductors such as the electrical wiring, plumbing, and telephone lines to the ground.

Avoid Unsafe Shelters!

Unless specifically designed to be lightning safe, small structures do little, if anything, to protect occupants from lightning. Many small open shelters on athletic fields, golf courses, parks, roadside picnic areas, schoolyards and elsewhere are designed to protect people from rain and sun, but not lightning. A shelter that does not contain plumbing or wiring throughout, or some other mechanism for grounding from the roof to ground is not safe. Small wooden, vinyl, or metal sheds offer little or no protection from lightning and should be avoided during thunderstorms.

How Lightning Enters a House or Building

There are three main ways lightning enters homes and buildings: (1) a direct strike, (2) through wires or pipes that extend outside the structure, and (3) through the ground. Regardless of the method of entrance, once in a structure, the lightning can travel through the electrical, phone, plumbing, and radio/television reception systems. Lightning can also travel through any metal wires or bars in concrete walls or flooring. (continued on next page)

Lightning Safety (continued) - Ann Muir

Stay Safe While Inside

Phone use is the leading cause of indoor lightning injuries in the United States. Lightning can travel long distances in both phone and electrical wires, particularly in rural areas. Stay away from windows and doors as these can provide the path for a direct strike to enter a home. Do not lie on the concrete floor of a garage as it likely contains a wire mesh. In general, basements are a safe place to go during thunderstorms. However, there are some things to keep in mind. Avoid contact with concrete walls which may contain metal reinforcing bars. Avoid washers and dryers since they not only have contacts with the plumbing and electrical systems, but also contain an electrical path to the outside through the dryer vent.

Remember Your Pets

You may want to consider the safety of your family pets during thunderstorms. **Doghouses are not lightning-safe.** Dogs that are chained to trees or chained to wire runners can easily fall victim to a lightning strike.

Protect Your Personal Property

Lightning also causes significant damage to personal property each year. In addition to direct strikes, lightning generates electrical surges that can damage electronic equipment some distance from the actual strike. Typical surge protectors will **NOT** protect equipment from a lightning strike. To the extent possible, unplug any appliances or electronic equipment from all conductors well before a thunderstorm threatens. This includes not only the electrical system, but also the reception system. If you plan to be away from your home when thunderstorms are possible, be sure to unplug unneeded equipment before you leave.

Summary of Lightning Safety Tips for Inside the Home

- Avoid contact with corded phones
- Avoid contact with electrical equipment or cords.
If you plan to unplug any electronic equipment, do so well before the storm arrives.
- Avoid contact with plumbing. Do not wash your hands, do not take a shower, do not wash dishes, and do not do laundry.
- Stay away from windows and doors, and stay off porches.
- Do not lie on concrete floors and do not lean against concrete walls.

When a Safe Location Is Not Nearby

The lightning safety community reminds you that there is NO safe place to be outside in a thunderstorm. If you absolutely can't get to safety, this section is designed to help you lesson the threat of being struck by lightning while outside. Don't kid yourself--you are NOT safe outside.

Being stranded outdoors when lightning is striking nearby is a harrowing experience. Your first and only truly safe choice is to get to a safe building or vehicle. If you are camping, climbing, on a motorcycle or bicycle, boating, scuba diving, or enjoying other outdoor activities and cannot get to a safe vehicle or shelter, follow these last resort tips. These will not prevent you from being hit, just slightly lesson the odds.

- Do NOT seek shelter under tall isolated trees. The tree may help you stay dry but will significantly increase your risk of being struck by lightning. Rain will not kill you, but the lightning can!
- Do NOT seek shelter under partially enclosed buildings
- Stay away from tall, isolated objects. Lightning typically strikes the tallest object. That may be you in an open field or clearing.
- Know the weather patterns of the area. For example, in mountainous areas, thunderstorms typically develop in the early afternoon, so plan to hike early in the day and be down the mountain by noon.
- Know the weather forecast. If there is a high chance of thunderstorms, curtail your outdoor activities.
- Do not place your campsite in an open field on the top of a hill or on a ridge top. Keep your site away from tall isolated trees or other tall objects. If you are in a forest, stay near a lower stand of trees. If you are camping in an open area, set up camp in a valley, ravine, or other low area. A tent offers NO protection from lightning.
- Wet ropes can make excellent conductors. This is BAD news when it comes to lightning activity. If you are mountain climbing and see lightning, and can do so safely, remove unnecessary ropes extended or attached to you. If a rope is extended across a mountain face and lightning makes contact with it, the electrical current will likely travel along the rope, especially if it is wet.
- Stay away from metal objects, such as fences, poles and backpacks. Metal is an excellent con-

Lightning Safety (continued) - Ann Muir

ductor. The current from a lightning flash will easily travel for long distances.

If lightning is in the immediate area, and there is no safe location nearby, stay at least 15 feet apart from other members of your group so the lightning won't travel between you if hit. Keep your feet together and sit on the ground out in the open. If you can possibly run to a vehicle or building, **DO** so. **Sitting or crouching on the ground is not safe and should be a last resort if an enclosed building or vehicle is not available.**

Motorcyclist/Bicyclist: So has anyone been hit riding a bike? Here are just a few real examples from the last few years.

- Virginia Beach, VA: Motorcyclist killed while traveling on Route 58.
- Altoona, PA: One motorcycle rider killed and three riders injured when they took shelter in a woods from a thunderstorm.
- Wyoming: Motorcyclist injured while driving home on I-90 from Sturgis.
- Taylor Park, CO: Dirt biker injured while heading down mountain pass.

Protect Yourself when on a bicycle, motorcycle or dirt bike.

- Carry a portable Weather Radio or listen to commercial radio.
- If you see threatening skies in the distance and you are passing a safe location, pull over and wait 30 minutes after the last thunder crack.
- If you can turn around and get away from the storm, do so!
- DO NOT ride into a lighting storm!

If you absolutely cannot get to a safe building or vehicle, here are some last resort choices:

- Wait out the storm below an overpass. DO NOT touch steel girders. Move away from your bike. Remain on dry surfaces if possible. Overpasses are engineered structures and are likely to be properly grounded. Although an overpass is likely to be higher than the surrounding landscape, if it is struck by lightning, the electrical current will likely be channeled safely into the ground.
- Look for a bridge. Stay away from water. Stay away from any metal surfaces. Be alert for rapidly rising water if under a bridge.
- High tension wires: If high voltage electrical tension wires cross the road, you may want to seek shelter directly underneath these wires. Do not get

too close to the large metal towers which hold up these wires. Stay at least 50 feet away. Electric companies design these high tension wires for lightning strikes. If lightning should strike the wires or towers, the current is designed to safely go deep into the ground.

- If you are caught in the open and lightning is occurring within 5 miles, STOP riding, get off of your motorcycle/bicycle, find a ditch or other low spot and sit down.
- Motorcyclists should move at least 50 feet away from their bike. Bicyclist should lay their bikes on the ground.

IMPORTANT: These recommendations are a last resort. You are NOT safe in these places just marginally safer than in the open.

On the Water

The vast majority of lightning injuries and deaths on boats occur on small boats with NO cabin. It is crucial to listen to the weather on a small aquatic vessel without a cabin. If thunderstorms are forecast, don't go out. If you are out on the water and skies are threatening, get back to land and find a safe building or vehicle.

Boats with cabins offer a safer but not perfect environment. Safety is increased further if the boat has a properly installed lightning protection system. If you are inside the cabin, stay away from metal and all electrical components. **STAY OFF THE RADIO UNLESS IT IS AN ABSOLUTE EMERGENCY!**

What should you do if you are on a small vessel and lightning becomes a threat? If the vessel has an anchor, then you should properly anchor the boat then get as low as possible.

Large boats with cabins, especially those with lightning protection systems properly installed or metal marine vessels are relatively safe. Remember to stay inside the cabin and away from any metal surfaces.

Lightning Safety Facts:

- Lightning is the #2 weather killer in the U.S., killing more than hurricanes and tornadoes combined! (only floods kill more)
- Lightning is the #1 weather killer in Florida, killing more than all other weather sources combined!
- Florida leads the U.S. in lightning deaths, injuries, and casualties!
- Pennsylvania leads the U.S. in lightning damage!



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MISSION STATEMENT

Tidewater Search and Rescue Group, Inc. provides trained personnel who effectively manage, support and sustain search and rescue operations when requested. This is accomplished through specialized training, constancy of purpose and continuous improvement.

VISION STATEMENT

For the search subject, the Tidewater Search and Rescue Group, Inc, will be recognized as the leader in training and management, providing the most professional and effective response to Ground Search and Rescue Incidents.

Quick Tip Corner—Dean Matty

1. DUCT TAPE – To store duct tape compactly in your pack, use a small pencil to wrap tape around. Make sure you wrap it loosely around the pencil until you get what you think is enough tape. Do not apply pressure or stretch it in anyway when wrapping it. It stores for a good while but if your pack is continuously exposed to high temperatures (environment, trunk of your vehicle or your own body heat) it may become difficult to peel it off when needed. If wrapped tightly it is also tough to unwrap when temperatures are cold.
 2. BUG REPELLANT - Avon’s Skin So Soft is a great bug repellent. It keeps mosquitoes, fleas, ticks, chiggers and biting flies at bay and it makes your skin smooth and kissable. You can also apply “SSS” to the brim or bill of your hat to keep bugs away from your face.
 3. RAIN/COLD GEAR – This may not be great in the woods unless you protect it from the briars, but in cold or rainy weather, a wet suit is great protection. You can find used ones for very little money at yard sales or pawnshops and they can be modified (cut) to suit the wearer. It will keep heat in and cold and water out. It also serves to keep all manners of critters off you when in the swamps or standing water (leeches etc.).
 4. BUG REPELLANT PART TWO – This is another medical one where you must be careful in case you have some type of reaction - If you have advanced notice (2 to 3 days) that you will be out in the woods another bug repellent is taking a common book of matches and sucking on the match heads. (It may taste terrible to you at first but it does grow on you.) The chemicals in the match heads build up in your system and make you smell to a bug and then they won’t want to eat you. On the more normal side, taking garlic pills will also work on shorter notice.
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