



# YMCA Services Corporation

## **GUIDELINES FOR INDOOR POOLS - CLOSING DUE TO LIGHTNING**

# RESOURCE

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## CLOSING INDOOR POOLS DUE TO LIGHTNING

As most of us know, lightning is part of a severe weather storm where electrical surges head from the clouds towards the earth or from the ground towards the sky. Lightning is generally thought of as a threat to outdoor facilities, but inside the building there is also a threat of electrocution. Simply put, if there is an electrical storm outside - you should evacuate the indoor pool as well.

What are some of the precautions that must be made? Your facility must be totally grounded and bonded. An licensed electrician this must certify this through a inspection that results in a letter or certificate being sent to the YMCA stating that the pool is certified bonded and grounded. What do these things mean?

**Bonded** - All of the metal parts, motors, brackets, cable, and remote panels should be connected (bonded) together to provide a grid.

**Grounded** - this grid, along with any other machinery, should be grounded to allow the electric surge to escape the facility without disrupting any systems or injuring anyone.

From a YMCA of the USA BFS Department Newsletter:

*A lightning protection system consists of air and ground terminals connected by a conductive system, which must be continuous to work. A building's structural steel is sometimes part of the conductive system. Since lightning takes the path of least resistance, discharges are attracted to air terminals which extend 18" above the top of the building. The current passes through the conductors to the ground terminals, where it is dissipated to the earth. Your building's electrical, plumbing, and communication systems must be grounded to electrodes, in accordance with the National Electrical Code. In a pool, all metals must be grounded.*

There may be some resistance from any members and guests who are using the pool at the time of the lightning storm, but it is for their own protection to evacuate. Your YMCA should make a policy to evacuate the pool when lightning is present, threatening, or when the conditions are right. The pool and shower areas should be evacuated until 30 minutes after the last evidence of lightning is present. While bonding and grounding *may* protect your participants, the YMCA should still evacuate the pool area to ensure safety.

Additional information on lightning can be found on the Internet at:

[www.lightningsafety.com](http://www.lightningsafety.com)  
<http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov/>

Or in the *On the Guard, YMCA Lifeguard Manual - Fourth Edition*.

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