Lightning: Let’s take precautions

By Charita Kuruppu

Watching the heavy showers and thunderstorms associated with the season, I experienced the moment of terror that comes with a storm on your doorstep. It is common to see lightning bolts strike nearby houses, trees, and other objects, causing a loud explosion and a rush of electricity. Lightning is a natural phenomenon that occurs due to the transfer of energy from one point to another. It is a result of the charge separation that occurs in the atmosphere, creating an electric field. Lightning strikes are not only dangerous but also destructive, causing injuries and fatalities. It is important to take precautions and stay safe during thunderstorms.

Lightning flash

The electric current of a ground flash is about 30,000 amperes (amp) and the potential difference between the charged cloud and the earth is about 100 million volts. A lightning flash, after traveling a distance of about half a kilometer, from cloud to cloud, then the lightning flash on its way to the ground. To reduce damage to property and loss of life by lightning, various prevention measures are recommended, such as grounding and shielding.

First aid

Lightning injuries are not always fatal. The site of the damage depends on the path of the lightning through the body and the current density of the strike. In case lightning strikes a person, first aid should be administered as soon as possible. The body should be examined for any signs of lightning-related injuries or fractures. The location and the physical properties of the object where the lightning occurred should be documented. The injuries should be treated promptly and appropriately.

Precautionary steps to be considered in order to reduce lightning hazards

1. Do not remain outside. If the area around you is not safe, seek shelter in a building or a vehicle. Use a vehicle as a last resort, but only if it is away from tall objects.
2. Do not touch or use metal objects. Avoid metal fences, poles, and other metal objects.
3. Do not go near a body of water or a metal object. Lightning can follow the path of least resistance.
4. Do not stand under a tree or near a tall object. Lightning can follow the path of least resistance.
5. Do not use a phone or computer, as lightning can travel through electrical systems.

It is important to stay safe during thunderstorms. Following these safety tips and precautions can help you avoid the dangers associated with lightning. Remember, lightning is a dangerous phenomenon that can cause injuries and fatalities. It is important to be prepared and take the necessary steps to stay safe during thunderstorms.