

## Safety Tips for Working in a Stormy Spring Season

By: Carmen Capitano, GSC, NSCO, Health, Safety & Training Manager, multiVIEW Locates

Spring is a temperamental season as winter brushes up against building warmth, higher sun angle and increase in daylight. While dramatic swings in weather are a normal part of the season, The Weather Network predicts that this spring will be especially volatile.

Stormy weather patterns pose unique safety challenges for utility locators and other outdoor workers. The most common dangers include slips, trips and falls. Strong winds can cause unsecured materials to be dislodged and scaffolding to lift. Wet and windy weather can also make driving more dangerous by reducing visibility.

Here are some key safety tips from multiVIEW's Health, Safety & Training Manager, Carmen Capitano, that will help you and your team work safely this spring:

- Make a habit of checking weather reports from a reputable source before beginning your project. Continuously monitor weather conditions throughout the duration of the project. Watch for darkening clouds and increasing wind speeds
- As part of your Health & Safety training, ensure that your staff members are trained and skilled to identify weather-related hazards and illnesses
- Ensure that field staff is equipped with the appropriate PPE including anti-fogging eye protection and wipes. If dark clouds and fog impede visibility, keep your project site illuminated even during day time hours
- Make sure that safety boots have anti-slip soles and ample tread to prevent slips and falls on wet surfaces. Pant legs should come over the top of the boots, rather than being tucked inside
- Ensure that gloves fit snugly and have a non-slip grip, particularly when working with hand tools
- Wear ventilated material that insulates even when wet. Wool or synthetic material is a good option. Dress in light layers: a three layer system is usually most effective consisting of a base layer, thermal layer and lightweight, waterproof protective outer shell
- Always refrain from using power tools in rainy weather, even after the rain has passed and wet conditions remain. Select hand tools that have a textured, non-slip grip
- Thunder is usually an indicator of impending lightening which tends to strike higher ground and prominent objects, especially those that conduct electricity, such as metal. During a thunderstorm, take shelter in a fully enclosed building and where that is not an option, take shelter in a hard topped vehicle with the windows closed
- If you are caught outside and unable to seek proper shelter, there are a few things you can keep in mind to minimize your chance of being struck by lightning. For example, avoid tall objects such as utility poles, phone towers or large equipment. Avoid open spaces and seek low lying areas such as a valley or a ditch, but watch for flooding and be sure to avoid water. Stay away from all metal objects such as wiring, fencing and plumbing

*Carmen Capitano is multiVIEW's Health, Safety & Training Manager. He is Gold Seal Certified and a National Safety Construction Officer with a track record of successfully leading large contracting companies through the COR certification and compliance process. Additional certifications include WHMIS, Working at Heights, Power Elevating Work Platform, Forklift (Standard & Rough Terrain), First Aid & CPR Level 1, Fire Extinguisher Level 1, and JHSC Certified Member.*