

## **Weird workplace accident: Gym teacher struck by lightning at desk**

On behalf of Johnston, Moore & Thompson

- April 22, 2011

An elementary school physical education coach was struck by lightning yesterday -- while he was sitting in his office inside the school. The man was taken to the hospital after the strange [workplace accident](#), but he has since been released and is expected to recover.

The gym coach works at Walker Elementary School in Northport. He had arrived for the day and was working in his office inside the school's activity center at around 7:15 a.m. when lightning struck the building.

The superintendent of the Tuscaloosa County Schools told reporters that the lightning somehow traveled through the building to strike the physical education coach. At the same time, the lightning knocked out the school's telephones, and the storm caused power outages at several schools in Tuscaloosa County. Power and phone service have now been restored.

The coach was taken to DCH Regional Medical Center with non-life-threatening injuries. Because his injuries happened during the course of his employment, his medical expenses should be covered by the Alabama workers' compensation system.

Although luckily this bizarre accident did not result in disabling injuries, workplace electrical hazards are no joke. Construction workers are at particular risk for burns and electrocution injuries in workplace accidents, and they can be extremely serious or even deadly.

Office employees are at substantially less risk of electrocution, but talking on the phone, working at a computer or being in contact with metal plumbing components during a lightning storm can increase that risk. If lightning strikes nearby, the potential exists for enough voltage to build up to injure someone.

**Source:** Associated Press, "[Lightning strikes elementary school coach as he sits in office](#)," April 21, 2011