



MERRIMACK FIRE DEPARTMENT

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BUILDING DIVISION



FAQ Lightning Strikes

A typical lightning strike can generate up to 50,000 degrees Fahrenheit with the odds of a fire resulting from the heat generated being great. Some fires are easy to locate while others may be hidden in spaces in attics or behind walls. Responding fire fighters can determine presented fire dangers, but hidden factors such as frayed or damaged wires can represent a potential danger not noticed until much later. A qualified electrician should be enlisted to diagnose hazards as soon as possible.

The typical home is properly grounded to earth by virtue of it's electrical system and in most cases there are some types of surge protection for computers and appliances, but not all of them will necessarily survive the random choices a strike may afford your property.

Here is a list of things connected to electrical power that have a potential for damage:

- All appliances including ranges, microwave ovens, refrigerators, coffee makers
- Smoke detectors, GFCI outlets, clock radios, stereos, music amplifiers, computers
- Any type of battery charger
- Well, septic, hot tub/spa, swimming pool and sump pumps
- Central vacuum systems
- Garage door openers, alarm, phone, automatic lawn sprinkler, and underground dog fence systems.
- All wiring systems
- All integrated or electronic circuits and equipment
- Circuit breakers
- All outlets and light fixtures

A lightning strike can enter your home in various manners other than a direct hit. It can travel through a root system of a tree if it is struck, a water system (such as a well), or through moisture in the ground.

Please enlist the service of a qualified electrician to insure a safe inspection and have a knowledgeable builder review anything structural BEFORE you assume you have discovered all the damage or file an insurance claim.