

Lightning Strikes Two Boys in North Carolina

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Myrtle Beach Sun News via Associated Press

Bald Head Island fire rescuers responded Sunday afternoon to two boys hit by lightning after one boy who had been swimming came out of the water and joined the other boy at the edge of the surf, said Chief Chip Munna with the Bald Head Island Fire Rescue Department in Southport, N.C. The boys, who Munna said he thinks are cousins from Virginia, are 9 and 11 years old. Their names were not released.

They are vacationing in the area with their family, Munna said.

Dispatch received a call about the incident at 12:03 p.m. Sunday, he said. The 9-year-old boy had gone into cardiac arrest, Munna said. Rescuers were able to resuscitate him. He had a pulse when he left the island, Munna said. Munna said bystanders were helping the mother of the 9-year-old boy with CPR when rescuers arrived on the scene. The boy was airlifted to New Hanover Regional Medical Center in Wilmington, N.C., Munna said. He said the boy, who was doing well Sunday, possibly could be sent to a hospital in Chapel Hill, N.C. The 11-year-old boy had visible damage to his foot, Munna said. The boy, who was in the house when the rescuers came, was conscious and alert, Munna said. He was taken by ambulance to Doshier Memorial Hospital in Southport. He could stay at Doshier or be sent to New Hanover for observation, Munna said.

Two adults walking along the beach also felt effects of the lightning and were checked, Munna said. They had no injuries, he said.

Cloud-to-ground lightning strikes an average of 25 million times each year in the U.S., experts say. Meteorologists say two-thirds of lightning injuries occur during outdoor work and recreational activities. Thunderstorms can happen any time of the year, they say, but with warm, moist air during the summer months, thunderstorms are more prevalent and people do more outdoor activities.

Most people struck by lightning survive, officials say, but victims can have brain damage, cardiac arrest and short-term memory loss. When people are hit by lightning, they typically are kept for a minimum of a day or two in the hospital to access them for any internal injuries, Munna said.

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