

NEIGHBORHOOD SPORTS LIGHTNING POLICY AND GUIDELINES

Adapted from the NCAA Guideline 1d for Lightning Safety

When inclement weather approaches, the following steps should be taken for the safety of all student-athletes, coaches, support staff and spectators.

1. In a preventive fashion, the Program Director will obtain an official weather report from the National Weather Service before each practice and/or contest. In the event of potential thunderstorms, the weather conditions will be monitored via the internet or phone app Weather Bug Spark. .

All personnel should monitor incoming severe weather using the Flash Bang method. To use the Flash Bang method, count the seconds from the time lightning/flash is sighted to when the clap/bang of thunder is heard. Divide this number by 5 and this equals how far away (in miles) the lightning is occurring. (For example, 20 second count = 4 miles). As a minimum, the NCAA and the National Severe Storms laboratory (NSSL), strongly recommend that all individuals leave the athletic sites and reach a safe location by the flash-to-bang count of 30 seconds (6 miles). However, lightning can strike as far as 10 miles and it does not have to rain for lightning to strike. Activities will be terminated at 40 seconds or 8 miles.

2. Chain of command for evacuating athletic teams/spectators **during competition:**

Program Director → Officials → Coaching Staff → Teams
↓
Spectators

Chain of command for evacuating athletic teams/spectators **during practice:**

Program Director → Coaching Staff → Athletic Teams
↓
Spectators

3. All sports programs will follow the guidelines established by NS. In the event that the Weather Bug Spark Lightning Detector reacts to nearby lightning strikes twice in the 0-8 mile range, all venues will be evacuated. The following will occur by all sporting programs during storm activity:

| Indication | Reaction by Department |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Severe Thunderstorm for distance | Monitor Weather Bug Spark |
| Storm Distance 0-8 miles | Evacuation to Safe Facility |
| Storm Distance 9 – above miles | Monitor for distance |

The existence of blue sky and the absence of rain are not protection from lightning. Lightning can, and does, strike as far as 10 miles away from the rain shaft. It does not have to be raining for lightning to strike.

4. It is the responsibility of the head coach for each practice to remove and direct all athletes, coaches, and parents to the nearest safe facility or to their automobile. (If the head coach is not present, the assistant coach will assume responsibility.) The safe shelters are:

| Sport Venue | Safe Facility |
|--|----------------------|
| All Sports Fields - Parents Automobile OR Indoor Building | |

*According to the NCAA Guideline 1d, a safe facility is defined as “any building normally occupied or frequently used by people, i.e., a building with plumbing and/or electrical wiring that acts to ground the structure. Avoid using shower facilities for safe shelter and do not use the showers or plumbing facilities during a thunderstorm.”

5. No team shall be allowed to return to practice and/or competition for 30 minutes after the Lightning Detector has returned to the safe range of “Storm Distance 8and above Miles” or no indication of lightning strikes on the detector for 30 minutes.
6. The Program Director (Game day) and/or On-Site Coach (Practices) will inform all parties that it is safe to return to the field of play.