



## Inclement Weather Policy

The presence of thunder and/or lightning necessitates that all outdoor activities be suspended immediately. The occurrence of **either** thunder or lightning is not subject to interpretation or discussion. If thunder and/or lightning is heard and/or observed all outdoor activities will be suspended immediately. Players and spectators shall be directed to a safe location.

The following recommendations are made to mitigate the lightning hazard:

- Identify an individual to monitor threatening weather conditions before, during and after outdoor activities and to make a final decision to suspend play.
- Monitor local weather reports daily prior to any scheduled outdoor activities. Be aware of the potential for severe weather and plan accordingly. Be aware of local weather service terminology: “watch” vs. “warning”, as well as the signs of storm development.
- Develop an emergency action plan for evacuation to a safe location for each venue that will host athletic practice and/or contests. Ensure that the designated safe location is immediately accessible (unlocked). Clearly identify appropriate nearby shelter locations with maps if necessary. A comprehensive plan should include instructions for participants and spectators as well as an established all clear signal. Communicate the emergency action plan to all officials and coaches prior to the need to take shelter to avoid unnecessary delay.

If thunder and/or lightning are present shelter must be taken for a minimum of 30 minutes from the time of the interruption before considering the resumption of play.

- A. If thunder and/or lightning is observed at the site of an outdoor activity 30 or fewer minutes prior to the scheduled start of that activity, the official/coaches and the responsible school authorities shall not permit the contest to begin on that date until the inclement weather has cleared or the conditions become playable.
- B. If thunder and/or lightning is observed during the playing of the outdoor activity, the official/coaches shall immediately cease play for a minimum of 30 minutes, have all participants and spectators seek \*appropriate shelter and then re-evaluate the situation.
- C. Any subsequent thunder and/or lightning after the beginning of the 30 minute count shall reset the clock and another 30 minute count shall begin.





\*Appropriate shelter is defined as any sturdy, fully enclosed, substantial building that has plumbing and/or electrical wiring that acts to electrically ground the structure.

Examples of locations routinely used that DO NOT meet the criteria for an appropriate shelter include:

- Baseball/softball dugouts;
  - Baseball/softball “covered” batting cages;
  - Outside storage sheds; and/or
  - Canopy/awning/tent/trees.
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- In the absence of a sturdy, fully enclosed shelter, a secondary structure such as a fully enclosed vehicle with a hard metal roof, rubber tire, and completely closed windows can provide a measure of safety. Convertibles, soft-top vehicles and golf carts do not provide a high level of protection and cannot be considered safe from lightning.
  - Persons should avoid taking showers and using plumbing facilities (including indoor and outdoor pools, whirlpools, Jacuzzis, and hot tubs) and land-line telephones during a thunderstorm.
  - If no safe structure or location is within a reasonable distance, personnel should find a thick grove of small trees surrounded by taller trees, or a dry ditch. Everyone should assume a lightning-safe position: a crouched position on the ground with the feet together, weight on the balls of the feet, head lowered and ears covered. Minimize the body’s surface area contact with the ground. Do not lie flat!
  - If unable to reach safe shelter, persons should stay away from the tallest trees or objects (i.e. light poles flag poles, etc.), metal objects (i.e. fences, bleachers, etc.), individual trees, standing pools of water and open fields. Persons should avoid being the highest object in an open field.
  - In situations where thunder and/or lightning may or may not be present, yet someone feels his/her hair stand on end and skin tingle, LIGHTNING IS IMMINENT! Therefore, all persons should assume a lightning-safe position, as described above.
  - A cellular and/or portable remote phone is a safe alternative to land-line phones, if the person and the antenna are located within a safe structure or location, and if all other precautions are followed.

More information on thunder and lightning safety can be found at the following:

[www.weather.gov](http://www.weather.gov)

[www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org)

