

## LIGHTNING SAFETY GUIDELINES

Lightning is one of the most consistent causes of weather-related deaths and injury in the U.S. Athletic administrators, coaches, contest officials, certified athletic trainers and players must recognize the hazard posed by lightning and know what to do to minimize the risk of serious injury or death during outdoor activities. The purpose of these guidelines is to provide guidelines to those responsible for making decisions concerning the suspension and restarting of contests based on the presence of lightning.

1. Assign staff to monitor local weather conditions before and during events.
2. Develop an evacuation plan, including identification of appropriate nearby safe structures for all personnel (athletes, officials, and spectators).
3. Develop a chain of command prior to the contest that identifies who is to make the call to suspend play. Once the contest begins, the contest officials will make the call to suspend play.
4. Develop a notification procedure that alerts players and spectators to clear the area and seek safe shelter.
5. Develop criteria for suspension and resumption of play:
  - a. When thunder is heard, or a lightning bolt is seen, the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Suspend play and take shelter immediately.
  - b. Thirty-minute rule. Once play has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or flash of lightning is witnessed prior to resuming play.
  - c. Any subsequent thunder or lightning after the beginning of the 30 minute count, reset the clock and another 30-minute count should begin.
4. Hold periodic reviews for appropriate personnel.

### Considerations For Safe Structures:

1. Turn off and stay away from electrical appliances. Avoid using a regular telephone (except in emergency situations).
2. A cellular or portable phone is safe if the person and the antenna are located within a safe location and if all other precautions are followed.
6. A car or bus can act as a "safe location" as long as the windows are closed completely and you stay away from the windows and avoid contact with metal inside the vehicle.
5. Dugouts and golf shelters are not safe structures and are not grounded for the effects of lightning..
7. The ideal safe structure is a fully enclosed building with plumbing, telephone, and electrical service, which aid in grounding the structure. Shelter should not be taken under or near trees, light poles, or flag poles. If no safe structure or location is within a reasonable distance, find a thick grove of small trees surrounded by taller trees or a dry ditch. Assume a crouched position on the ground with only the balls of the feet touching the ground, wrap your arms around your knees and lower your head. **DO NOT LIE FLAT ON THE GROUND**