

Thunder/Lightening Policy HCPS Athletics

Officials (Athletic Directors, Coaches, Administrators, Sports Officials, Athletic Trainers, etc.) responsible for sports outdoor activities need to understand thunderstorms and lightning to make educated decisions on when to seek safety. Without this knowledge, officials may base their decisions on personal experience and or a desire to complete the activity. Unfortunately, decisions based on past experience or a desire to complete the activity can put the lives of those involved at risk.

For organized outdoor activities, the National Weather Service recommends that organizers have a lightning safety plan and follow it without exception. Below is information regarding how HCPS athletics will respond to a thunder/lightening situation.

When should activities be stopped?

If lightning can be seen and/or thunder heard, **STOP** the activity **IMMEDIATELY** and get all participants to a safe place. Lightning and thunder can be seen/heard from storms that are 10 miles away.

Where should people go for safety?

There is no place outside that is safe when a thunderstorm is in the area. Buildings with wiring and plumbing provide the greatest amount of protection. Schools, bathroom facilities with plumbing and on-site locker-room facilities are examples of buildings that would offer good protection. Once inside, stay away from windows and doors and anything that conducts electricity such as corded phones, wiring, plumbing, and anything connected to these. **Note that small outdoor buildings including dugouts, rain shelters, sheds, etc., are NOT SAFE.** In the absence of a substantial building, a hard-topped metal vehicle with the windows closed provides good protection.

When should activities be resumed?

Because electrical charges can linger in clouds after a thunderstorm has seemingly passed, experts agree that people should wait at least **30 minutes after the last thunder before resuming outdoor activities.**

Who should monitor the weather and make the decision to stop activities?

The Athletic Trainer and coaches will monitor the weather situation and notify the athletic director/officials/administrator on duty of any thunder or lightning threat. The previously mentioned officials will work together to get all involved participants off the practice fields and/or game fields.

What should be done if someone is struck by lightning?

Call 911 for medical help. Victims do not carry an electrical charge. In many cases, the victim's heart and/or breathing may have stopped. CPR or an AED may be needed to revive them. Continue to monitor the victim until medical help arrives. If possible, move the victim to a safer place inside away from the threat of another lightning strike.