

GUIDELINES FOR LIGHTNING

The protection of Reynoldsburg Parks & Recreation participants is of paramount importance. Every participant should recognize the danger presented by lightning, tornados and other hazardous weather. The following items represent generally accepted principles regarding the dangers involved with lightning.

Practice and training increase recreation performance. Similarly, preparedness can reduce the risk of the lightning hazard. Lightning is the most frequent weather hazard impacting athletic events. Baseball/softball, soccer, flag football, lacrosse, skiing, swimming, tennis, track and field events...all these and other outdoor sports have been visited by lightning.

As of May 2018, a Lightning Detection system has been installed with warning sirens and strobe lights at the JFK Park utility building, the Civic Park utility building & at Huber Park just north of the Spangler field parking lot. Livingston House Park only has siren horns at the lower parking lot. Sirens and strobe lights are active from 8:00am – 10:00pm.

A Lightning Detection System provides early-warning of lightning throughout our parks. The Strike Guard Early Warning System detects and tracks lightning strikes and provides warning when strikes are within a 5 mile radius.

When lightning strikes have been detected within the 5 mile warning area, the system will provide a warning, one long (15-second) siren will sound, and a strobe will flash on the unit. After the Strike Guard System determines conditions are safe, (30 continuous minutes of no lightning) the horn will sound a 15 second blast and the strobe will go off, providing notice that it is safe to resume activity in this area.

SUMMARY: With a detected lightning strike within 5 miles:

- a. The warning siren will sound
- b. Strobes will begin flashing until no additional strikes occur within 5 miles for 30 minutes
- c. The horn will sound an all clear and the strobe will shut off

Be vigilant in monitoring threatening weather and always error on the side of caution. In the event the lightning warning siren goes off, all the fields/ball diamonds should be cleared immediately. Everyone should proceed to a safe shelter in the event that the siren goes off or you arrive to the park and the strobe light is on. Please seek shelter at one of the below areas:

- a. Fully enclosed metal vehicles with windows up.
- b. Substantial buildings.
- c. The low ground. Seek cover in clumps of bushes.

Unsafe lightning shelter areas include all outdoor metal objects like flag poles, fences and gates, high mast light poles, metal bleachers, golf cars, machinery, etc. AVOID trees. AVOID water. AVOID open fields. AVOID the high ground.

If you feel your hair standing on end, and/or hear "crackling noises" - you are in lightning's electric field. If caught outside during close-in lightning, immediately remove metal objects (including baseball cap), place your feet together, duck your head, and crouch down low in baseball catcher's stance with hands on knees.

FIRST AID FOR LIGHTNING VICTIMS:

If someone in your presence is struck by lightning, it is safe to touch them to administer medical treatment. You are not at risk with helping since individuals struck by lightning do not carry an electrical charge. Apply first aid immediately if you are qualified to do so. Call 9-1-1 & get emergency help promptly.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON LIGHTNING:

- All thunderstorms produce lightning and are dangerous.
- Lightning often strikes as far as 10 miles away from any rainfall. You are in danger from lightning if you can hear thunder. You are in danger if you can see lightning.
- Lightning injuries can lead to permanent disabilities or death. Look for dark cloud bases and increasing wind.
- Lightning can travel sideways for up to 10 miles and strike when skies are blue.
- Avoid standing in an open area, near soccer goals, under a tent, near trees or in water. The safest place during a thunderstorm with or without visible lightning is in a car, but not a convertible.
- Lightning is an unpredictable force that should be taken seriously. Your best defenses against lightning are to avoid potential situations and exposures that put you in danger. Staying alert of weather situations that may have lightning involved, and having a quick plan of response to seek shelter can help to keep everyone safe.

Below are some links for more information on lightning and the Strike Guard system:

NOAA website <http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov/>

Strike Guard website <http://www.wxline.com/>

Remember that the warning siren will go off indicating lightning is in the area. The siren going off means it is time to clear the field immediately and seek a safe spot & shelter in place until the clear horn goes off indicating lightning has not been detected for 30 minutes*