

GUIDELINES FOR LIGHTNING AND HAZARDOUS WEATHER CONDITIONS

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 and tornados.

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

Education is the single most important means to achieve lightning safety. The following is the lightning safety plan for Reynoldsburg Parks and Recreation as suggested by the National Lightning Safety Institute and Mid-Ohio Select Soccer League:

1. The Site Supervisor (SS) is designated to monitor current weather conditions. A lightning detector will be at JFK Park and Civic Park. It is the responsibility of the SS to familiarize themselves with this device.
2. If the athletic area should need to be cleared the following is a list of SAFE lightning evacuation sites. SAFE evacuation sites include:
 - a. Fully enclosed metal vehicles with windows up.
 - b. Substantial buildings.
 - c. The low ground. Seek cover in clumps of bushes.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. Wait a minimum of 30 minutes from the last observed lightning or thunder before resuming activities.

"If you can see it, flee it; if you can hear it, clear it."

6. People who have been struck by lightning do not carry an electrical charge and are safe to handle. Apply first aid immediately if you are qualified to do so. Get emergency help promptly.

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.
- Soccer fields are a dangerous place to be during a lightning storm. When lightning is seen or thunder is heard, or when dark threatening clouds are observed, quickly suspend the game and/or practice and move to a safe location.
- 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.

TORNADOS:

- Watch for rapidly darkening skies.
- The sound of an approaching tornado is often described as that of an approaching train.
- The funnel of a tornado does not have to touch down to cause extensive damage and injuries.
- TORNADOS can produce winds of 300 miles per hour or more.
- Most people who are hurt during a tornado are hurt when they are struck by flying debris.
- Seek safety in a solid structure, preferably in a basement or in an interior room. If no building is available, lay down in a ditch.

GAME SUSPENSION REQUIREMENTS:

In any of the circumstances outlined below occurs, the SS or referee should immediately suspend the game:

1. If thunder is heard, the game should be suspended and the fields cleared. Everyone should immediately go to a safe shelter.
2. If lightning is seen, the game should be suspended and the fields cleared. Everyone should immediately go to a safe shelter.
3. If a thunderstorm is heard or seen coming or your hair stands on end, the game should be suspended and the fields cleared. Everyone should immediately go to a safe shelter. Do not wait until it rains.
4. Wait a minimum of 30 minutes from the last observed lightning or thunder before resuming activities.

"If you can see it, flee it; if you can hear it, clear it."

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.

You should immediately call 911. The rescuer should also keep in mind their safety if a continuing storm is threatening. If the victim does not appear to be suffering complications from the strike, the rescuer should not be afraid to move them to safer ground.

If the victim is not breathing, start mouth to mouth resuscitation. If you decide to move the victim to safer ground, give a few quick breaths prior to moving them. Determine if there is a pulse. If there is no pulse, start cardiac compressions as well. Getting the victim to emergency treatment is critical.

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.

"If you can see it, flee it; if you can hear it, clear it."