



Lightning Policy

Because thunderstorms and lightning are a dangerous and rapidly changing weather phenomenon that puts all athletes, spectators, support staff, and officials at risk, the Muscookee County School District and Hughston Orthopedic Hospital have developed a Lightning and Severe Weather detection system to help prevent serious injury from such an occurrence.

To better protect athletes, spectators, support staff, and officials, the use of The SkyScan Lightning Storm Detector will be implemented, along with the Flash-Bang Method, to detect the presence of lightning/thunderstorms in the area.

The SkyScan Lightning Storm Detector

The SkyScan Lightning Storm Detector is a hand held electronic device that is able to detect the presence of lightning, thunderstorms and severe weather activity occurring within 40 miles the event site. Distances of the lightning/thunderstorm activity are indicated in four ranges: 0-3 miles, 3-8 miles, 8-20 miles, and 20-40 miles. Each time the SkyScan detects a lightning strike, it emits an audible warning tone and lights the Range Indicator Column. The full column stays lit for 3 seconds, followed by the single indicator corresponding to the range of the detected stroke blinking for 25 seconds.

Because the average stroke of lightning is 6 miles long, and thunderstorms can move at speeds +/- 25 mph, immediate danger is present any time there is detected lightning activity within 8-10 miles of the course.

Flash-Bang Method

This method of lightning detection should be used in conjunction with the SkyScan.

1. Watch for the flash of lightning.
2. Begin to count (one, one thousand, two, one thousand, etc...)
3. Stop counting when you hear the bang of thunder.
4. Take this number and divide by 5. This will give you an approximation of how far away the lightning is (5 seconds = 1 mile).
5. Activity should be suspended with lightning at, or within, 6 miles of the golf course.
6. Activity is resumed with the permission of the **athletic staff member* responsible for monitoring the weather 30 minutes after the last lightning detected at or within 6 miles of the course.

**This responsibility will fall upon the certified athletic trainer. In the absence of a certified athletic trainer, the head coach will assign a designee to monitor the weather and make a decision to suspend, and resume, play.*

General Policy

A member of **athletic staff* will monitor the weather and make the decision to suspend activity in the event of imminent lightning and/or weather conditions. This decision will be based on the following criteria:

1. Two subsequent readings on the SkyScan Lightning Storm Detector in the 8-20 mile range, regardless of the presence of visible lightning.
2. Utilization of the Flash-Bang method revealing lightning within 6 miles (a 30 second count between the flash of lightning and the bang of thunder)
3. A reading from the SkyScan Lightning Storm Detector that a severe weather system is within the 6 mile radius of the event site.

**This responsibility will fall upon the certified athletic trainer. In the absence of a certified athletic trainer, the head coach will assign a designee to monitor the weather and make a decision to suspend, and resume, play.*

- I. **Announcement of Suspension of Activity:** Once it is determined that there is danger of a lightning strike, the **athletic staff member* responsible for monitoring the weather will notify the activity official (i.e. referee, umpire, etc.) that the activity has been delayed until the weather returns to a safe pattern. The activity official will then notify all other officials to begin the removal of the athletes from the venue and the spectators from danger.

**This responsibility will fall upon the certified athletic trainer. In the absence of a certified athletic trainer, the head coach will assign a designee to monitor the weather and make a decision to suspend, and resume, play.*

- II. **Evacuation of the Course:** Immediately following the announcement of suspension of activity, all athletes, officials, support staff, and spectators are to evacuate to the designated shelter.

If you are unable to reach shelter, seek a flat area or a ditch without water, crouch down wrapping your arms around your knees, lower your head and wait for the storm to pass. **DO NOT** choose an open area where you will be the highest object. **DO NOT** seek shelter under a tree. Many lightning victims are struck by lightning that hit the tree they were under and traveled down the tree trunk and then hit them.

- III. **Resumption of Activity:** Activity may resume once the **athletic staff member* responsible for monitoring the weather determines that the venue is safe from severe weather. This staff member gives permission to resume activity based on the following criteria:

1. Two consecutive readings of lightning strikes 20-40 miles away on the SkyScan Lightning Storm Detector and 30 minutes after the last indication of a storm within the 8-20 mile range.
 - a. If at any time during the 30 minute "countdown" to resume play, there are two consecutive readings in the 8-20 mile range, the **athletic*

- staff member* responsible for monitoring the weather is to notify activity officials that severe weather is still in the area.
- b. Play is not to resume until he/she sees two consecutive readings in the 20-40 mile range.
 - c. At that time, the 30 minute “countdown” will begin again.
 - d. Once those 30 minutes are up, play can resume.
2. Thirty minutes **AFTER** the **LAST** lightning strike within a 6 mile range using the Flash-Bang method.

**This responsibility will fall upon the certified athletic trainer. In the absence of a certified athletic trainer, the head coach will assign a designee to monitor the weather and make a decision to suspend, and resume, play.*

REMEMBER: An automobile, golf cart, or open shelter may not protect you from a lightning strike, so these ARE NOT adequate shelters.

Other Lightning Safety Tips

1. There should be **NO** contact with metal objects.
2. Single trees and standing in a group should be **AVOIDED**.
3. If you are unable to seek refuge in the Shelter Homes, you may seek refuge in a hard-topped vehicle. Rubber tires do not protect from lightning, but the hard top roof dissipates the lightning around the vehicle.
4. **DO NOT** lie flat on the ground.
5. If in a forest, seek shelter in a low area under a thick grove of small trees.
6. Persons who have been struck by lightning **DO NOT** carry an electric charge. Therefore, you **CAN** provide care. CPR is most often required. Move the victim to a safe location.

National Athletic Trainer’s Association’s Recommendations for Lightning Safety

1. Establish a chain of command that identifies who is to make the call to remove individuals from the field.
2. Name a designated weather watcher.
3. Have a means of monitoring local weather forecasts and warnings.
4. Designate a safe shelter for each venue.
5. Use the Flash-Bang method to determine when to go to safety. By the time the flash-bang count has reached 30 seconds, all individuals should be already inside a safe structure.
6. Once activities have been suspended, wait at least thirty minutes following the last sound of thunder or lightning flash prior to resuming an activity or returning outdoors.
7. Avoid being the highest point in an open field, in contact with, or proximity to the highest point, as well as being on the open water. **Do not** take shelter under or near trees, flagpoles, or light poles.

8. Assume the lightning safe position (crouched on the ground, weight on balls of feet, feet together, head lowered, and ears covered) for individuals who feel their hair stand on end, skin tingle, or hear crackling noises. **Do not** lie flat on the ground.
9. Observe the following basic first aid procedures in managing victims of a lightning strike:
 - a. Survey the scene for safety.
 - b. Activate local EMS.
 - c. Lightning victims do not carry a charge and are safe to touch.
 - d. If necessary, move the victim to a safe location.
 - e. Evaluate airway, breathing, and circulation, and begin CPR if necessary.
 - f. Evaluate and treat for hypothermia, shock, fractures, and/or burns.
10. All individuals have the right to leave an athletic site in order to seek a safe structure if the person feels in danger of impending lightning activity, without fear of repercussions or penalty.

Safe Shelter:

1. A safe location is any substantial, frequently inhabited building. The building should have four solid walls (not a dug out), electrical and telephone wiring, plumbing, all of which aid in grounding a structure.
2. The secondary choice for a safer location from the lightning hazard is a fully enclosed vehicle with a metal roof and the windows completely closed. It is important to not touch any part of the metal framework of the vehicle while inside it during ongoing thunderstorms.
3. It is not safe to shower, bathe, or talk on landline phones while inside a safe shelter during thunderstorms. Cell phones are **OK**.