



Lightning Policy

Due to the significant risks and possibility of fatal injury from lightning strikes, it is imperative the Christiansburg Department of Parks and Recreation have a clear policy on how to deal with lightning in and around the areas of practice and / or competition. This policy will help to clearly state the department's position on this issue and help to define roles of certain individuals during the decision making process. The Christiansburg Department of Parks and Recreation, coaches and support staff's primary responsibility is for the safety and concern of the participants, spectators and staff.

The following plan will be in effect for all Christiansburg Department of Parks and Recreation youth and adult athletic events, including practices and special events:

Depending on the event being played the Youth Athletic or Adult Athletic Supervisor, Game Field Supervisor or Coach will monitor the weather. This will be done through the use of the DTN Weather Sentry Lightning and Storm detector (if equipped) or by the Flash-to Bang Method.

In the event of threatening or inclement weather the Youth Athletic or Adult Athletic Supervisor, Game Field Supervisor or Coach will inform the participants and spectators either through the public address system or any other means available of impending severe weather.

GENERAL POLICY: A member of the Christiansburg Department of Parks and Recreation Staff, if on site will monitor the weather and make the decision to notify the Game Field Supervisor (during a game) or Head Coach (during practice) of dangerous situations and recommend the suspension of activity in the event of lightning. Exceptions will be made for any activity where a Christiansburg Department of Parks and Recreation or Game Field Supervisor is not in attendance, whereby the supervising coach will have the ability to suspend activity. The decision to suspend activity will be based on:

- Any reported lightning strike on the DTN Weather Sentry Lightning/Storm Detector within the 10 mile range regardless of the presence of visible lightning. (This device is portable and will be in the possession of the Youth Athletic or Adult Athletic Supervisor, Game Field Supervisor or Coach, and/or
- Utilization of the **Flash-to-Bang Method** (Count the seconds from the time the lightning is sighted to when the clap of thunder is heard. Divide this number by five to obtain how far away, in miles, the lightning is occurring.) If it reveals lightning to be within 10 miles (a 50 second count between the flash of lightning and the bang of thunder) activity is to be suspended and everyone should seek shelter immediately.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUSPENSION OF ACTIVITY: Once it is determined that there is a danger of inclement weather, the Youth Athletic or Adult Athletic Supervisor will notify the Game Field Supervisor (during a game) or Head Coach (during practice) and immediately request the removal of all players, coaches, and support staff from the playing field.

EVACUATION OF THE PLAYING FIELD AND STANDS: Immediately following the public address announcement (if available) of suspension of play, all players, coaches, officials, support personnel and spectators are to evacuate

the facility to their vehicles or buses. Participants and spectators should be advised that we **DO NOT** consider the bathrooms, dugouts, bleachers, playground equipment and/or areas under the picnic shelters within our facilities to be deemed a safe location in the case of lightning. All parties will be urged to evacuate the entire facility immediately and remain in a safe location until conditions improve unless otherwise notified by appropriate representatives.

RETURN TO PLAY: Play will be resumed 30 minutes following the last lightning strike. The last lightning strike will be determined by either the detection system or visual confirmation. The 30 minute time frame will immediately start over with each additional lightning strike.

In the Event of a Thunder and Lightning Storm



- Listen for announcement over PA (Public Address System) if available



- Find Safe Location in a vehicle.



- Wait for announcement to return to play.

In the event of a thunder/lightning storm the following precautions should be taken. Play will be postponed until thirty minutes after the last lightning strike.

Safe Locations

- Vehicles with hard roofs. Once inside a vehicle do not make contact with any metal parts.

Use of Phones

- Cell phones and cordless phones are able to be used in a safe location. Avoid using land line phones.

What to do if you can't get to a safe location:

- Find a dry ditch or a large grouping of shrubs and small trees. Find these areas and take shelter.

- Make your body as small as possible minimizing surface area for lightening strike. Crouch on the balls of your feet, DO NOT lie flat on the ground.
- Stay away from isolated small trees and large metal objects such as flagpoles and light poles.
- Stay away from any other metal objects such as bleachers and metal fences.
- Don't stand in an open field
- Stay away from standing bodies of water such as a pool, lake, or pond.

Possible Sensations that a lightning strike may be eminent (assume a crouched position):

- Hair standing on end
- Skin tingling
- A crackling sensation

Lightning Facts:

- On average, about 67% of lightning fatalities and injuries occur outdoors at recreation events (athletic events, lakes and on golf courses) and near trees.
- On average, 55 people are killed and more than 1,000 are injured by lightning strikes in the United States each year.