

Flower Mound Lacrosse Association

Lightning Safety Policy and Procedure *

Lightning may be the most frequently encountered severe storm hazard endangering physically active people each year. Millions of lightning flashes strike the ground annually in the United States, causing nearly 100 deaths and 400 injuries. Three quarters of all lightning casualties occur between May and September, and nearly four fifths occur between 10:00 am and 7:00 pm, which coincides with the hours for most athletic events.

At the practice and game facilities located within the parks of the Town of Flower Mound and City of Highland Village as well as the facilities at LISD Schools such as Flower Mound High School and Shadow Ridge Middle School, the owner of each respective facility has installed a Lightning Warning System (Thor Guard Lightning Prediction System). Lightning is a severe hazard that must be viewed seriously. Everyone should immediately seek shelter any time they believe lightning threatens them, even if a signal has **not** been sounded.

You will be warned by the Thor Guard Lightning Prediction System, which sounds ONE - 15 second blast of the horn signaling suspension of all activities. A strobe light will begin flashing and remain flashing until safe conditions return. You should immediately seek an appropriate, safe shelter.

You may resume activities only after THREE - 5 second blasts of the horn are sounded and the strobe light stops flashing.

IF YOU REMAIN OUTDOORS AFTER THE WARNING IS ISSUED, YOU DO SO AT YOUR OWN RISK!!!

LIGHTNING SAFETY TIPS

SEEK

- Large Buildings
- Lightning Shelters
- Automobile/Trucks
- Tunnels With No Standing Water

*When one of the above is not available seek:

- Dense Woods
- Low Lying Areas

AVOID

- Open Areas
- Water
- Tall Trees
- Metal Fences

- Overhead Wires and Power Lines
- High Ground Areas
- Telephones & Cellular Phones
- Radios
- Small, Unprotected Shelters

Recommendations for Lightning Safety – When Thor Guard System is not available such as at the Cross Timbers YMCA practice/game field:

1. Head Coaches shall be the lead in making the call to remove individuals from the field. Head Coaches shall be aware of the weather during a game or at practice and actively look for the signs of threatening weather in order to make an appropriate and safe call to remove individuals from the field..
2. See Lightning Safety Tips above for recommendations on shelter at practices/games.
3. Use the Flash-to-Bang count to determine when to go to safety. By the time the flash-to-bang count approaches thirty seconds all individuals should be already inside a safe structure. See method of determining Flash-to-Bang count below.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. Assume that lightning safe position (crouched on the ground, weight on the balls of the 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.
7. Observe the following basic first aid procedures in managing victims of a lightning strike:
 - Activate local EMS
 - Lightning victims do not "carry a charge" and are safe to touch.
 - If necessary, move the victim with care to a safer location.
 - Evaluate airway, breathing, and circulation, and begin CPR if necessary.
 - Evaluate and treat for hypothermia, shock, fractures, and/or burns.
8. 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 from anyone.

Definitions

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, as well as 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 talk on landline phones while inside of a safe shelter during thunderstorms. Cell phones are OK.

Flash-to-Bang:

To use the flash-to-bang method, begin counting when sighting a lightning flash. Counting is stopped when the associated bang (thunder) is heard. Divide this count by five to determine the distance to the lightning flash (in miles). For example, a flash-to-bang count of thirty seconds equates to a distance of six miles. Lightning has struck from as far away as 10 miles from the storm center. Postpone or suspend activity if a thunderstorm appears imminent before or during an activity or contest (irrespective of whether lightning is seen or thunder heard) until the hazard has passed. Signs of imminent thunderstorm activity are darkening clouds, high winds, and thunder or lightning activity.

** - taken from http://www.uil.utexas.edu/athletics/health/lightning_safety.html*