



GUIDELINES FOR LIGHTNING AND HAZARDOUS WEATHER CONDITIONS

The protection of Copperas Cove 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.

Over the past century, lightning has consistently been 1 of the top 3 causes of weather-related deaths in this country. It kills approximately 100 people and injures hundreds more each year. Lightning is an enormous and widespread danger to the physically active population.

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 Copperas Cove Parks and Recreation as suggested by the National Lightning Safety Institute:

1. 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. Structurally sound buildings.
 - c. The low ground. Seek cover in clumps of bushes.
2. UNSAFE LIGHTNING SHELTER AREAS include all outdoor metal objects like flag poles, fences and gates, high mast light poles, metal bleachers, golf carts, cars, machinery, etc. AVOID trees. AVOID water. AVOID open fields. AVOID the high ground.
3. Lightning's distance from you is easy to calculate: if you hear thunder, it and the associated lightning are within auditory range...about 6-8 miles away. The distance from Strike A to Strike B also can be 6-8 miles. Ask yourself why you should NOT go to shelter immediately. Of course, different distances to shelter will determine different times to suspend activities. A good lightning safety motto is: "If you can see it (lightning) flee it; if you can hear it (thunder), clear it."
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.



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.
- Tornadoes 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.

LIGHTNING DETECTORS:

- CCPARD staff will carry a “Personal Lightning Detector” during any outdoor event, open swim, or field competition. The “Strike Alert HD” has 360 degree lightning strike detection and detects lightning up to 40 miles away. This device serves as further security against lightning storms.

GAME SUSPENSION REQUIREMENTS:

In any of the circumstances outlined below occurs, CCPARD staff or referee(s) 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.



5. The game will be cancelled by the decision of CCPARD staff if lightning continues for an extended amount of time, or if the forecasted weather is unsafe for participants and spectators.