

Pope John Paul II Catholic High School Inclement Weather Policy

Lightning is a dangerous phenomenon. Athletic teams that practice and compete outdoors are at risk when the weather is inclement. Pope John Paul II Catholic High School (PJPIICHS) developed an inclement weather policy to minimize the risk of injury from a lightning strike and tornado related issues to coaches, support staff and fans. To monitor lightning the PJPIICHS athletic trainer/coaching staff will utilize both the Flash-to-Bang Method.

GENERAL POLICY: The athletic trainer/coaching staff will monitor the weather and make the decision to notify the head coach or officials of dangerous situations and recommend the suspension of activity in the event of lightning. The decision to suspend activity will be based on:

- ◆ 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 6 miles (a 30 second count between the flash of lightning and the bang of thunder) activity is to be suspended and everyone should seek shelter immediately.

PRIOR TO COMPETITION: The athletic trainer and/coaching staff will greet the officials, explain that we have a means to monitor the lightning, and offer to notify the officials during the game if there is imminent danger from the lightning. The athletic trainer/coaching staff and game officials will then decide whether to discontinue play.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUSPENSION OF ACTIVITY: Once it is determined that there is danger of a lightning strike, the athletic trainer will notify the head coach (if the athletic trainer is not in attendance the coaching staff) and/or official and subsequently immediately remove all athletes, coaches, and support staff from the playing field or practice area/facility.

EVACUATION OF THE PLAYING FIELD: Immediately following the announcement of suspension of activity all athletes, coaches, officials and support personnel are to evacuate to the nearest enclosed grounded structure.

OUTDOOR INSTRUCTIONS: If no safe structure or location is within a reasonable distance, find a thick grove of small trees surrounded by taller trees, a dry ditch without water, or seek a flat area (do not chose an open area where you will be the highest object). When there, crouch down wrapping your arms around your knees and lower your head to minimize contact with the ground and wait for the storm to pass.

REMEMBER: an automobile, golf cart, or open shelter are not ideal shelters, but will offer you some protection from a lightning strike. Do not touch any metal structures directly after a lightning strike.

Venue Evacuations

- Downtown Rescue Mission (Football Practice)- the gymnasium
- Max Luther Football Field- Max Luther Gymnasium
- Optimist Park/practice and game-Optimist Recreation Center
- Fern Gully practice and game-Fern Bell Gymnasium
- Merrimack park/Soccer Games-Restrooms
- Soccer practices- Evacuate to closet ground enclosed structure
- Tennis /practice and matches- Evacuate to closet ground enclosed structure
- Cross-Country and Track practice and events- Evacuate to closet ground enclosed structure
- Golf Game/Practice and events- Evacuate to closet ground enclosed stru

Away Events: PJPICHS athletic trainer/coaching staff reserves the right to discuss playing, in the event the game officials have not suspended play with the knowledge of inclement weather.

EVACUATION OF THE STANDS: During a competition, once the decision to suspend activity has been made, a representative of the athletic staff will announce:

1. Fans are advised to immediately seek shelter in the nearest enclosed, grounded shelter.
2. **REMEMBER:** an automobile, golf cart, or open-sided shelter may not protect you from a lightning strike so these are not adequate shelters.

RESUMPTION OF ACTIVITY: During practice, activity may resume under the following conditions. This decision will be based on:

- ◆ Thirty minutes **AFTER** the last lightning strike within a 6-mile range using the Flash-To-Bang method. During a game situation the activity will resume once the athletic director, athletic trainer, coaching staff, and officials have conferred and the above criteria have been met.

OTHER LIGHTNING SAFETY TIPS

1. There should be no contact with metal objects (bleachers, fences, golf clubs, bats)
2. Avoid single or tall trees, tall objects and standing in a group.
3. If there is no other shelter you may seek refuge in a hardtop vehicle. It is not the rubber tires that protect from lightning; it is the hard top metal roof that dissipates the lightning around the vehicle.
4. The existence of blue skies and/or absence of rain are not protection from lightning. Lightning can strike 10 miles from the rain shaft.
5. **DO NOT LIE FLAT ON THE GROUND**
6. Avoid using a land line telephone. Cell phones are a safe alternative if in a safe structure.
7. Avoid standing water and open fields
8. If in a forest, seek shelter in a low area under a thick grove of small trees.
9. If you feel your skin tingling immediately crouch and grab your legs and tuck your head as described above to minimize your body's surface area.
10. Persons who have been struck by lightning do not carry an electrical charge. Therefore, enact the EMS system and provide emergency care. CPR is what is most often required. If possible, move the victim to a safe location.
11. For additional information refer to the National Lightning Safety Institute at www.lightningsafety.com

FLASH-to-BANG Lightning Detection Method

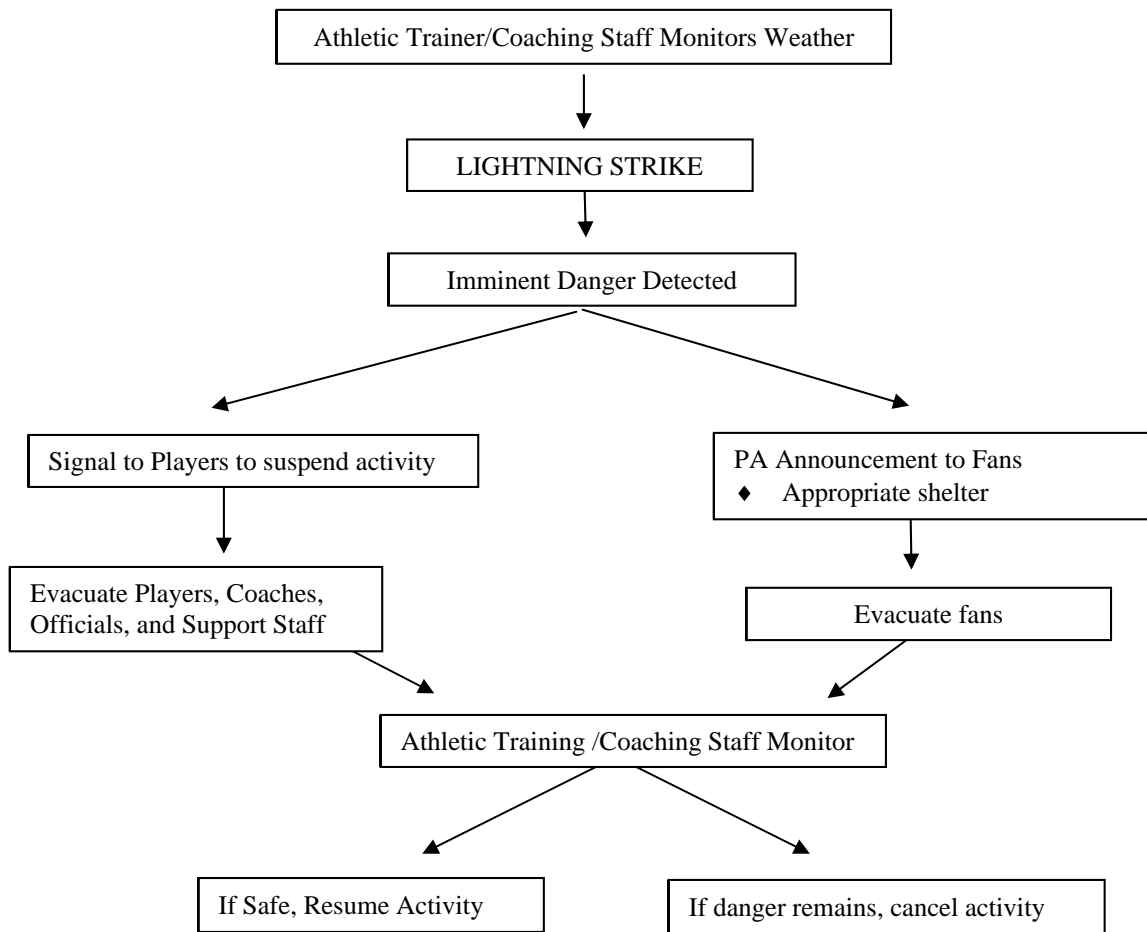
1. Prior to practice or competition, monitor weather forecast to include calling local agencies for up to date information.
2. Watch for the flash of lightning.
3. Begin to count (one one thousand, two one thousand)
4. Stop counting when you hear the bang of thunder.
5. Take this number and divide by 5. This will give you an approximation of how far away the lightning is (5 seconds = 1 mile). **EXAMPLE:** You see a flash of lightning and you begin to count. You reach 45 before you hear the bang of thunder. $45 \div 5 = 9$. The lightning would be approximately 9 miles away. Using this method you would suspend activity with lightning at or within 6 miles.

6. Activity is resumed with the permission of a member of the Athletic Training Staff 30 minutes after the last lightning detected at or within 6 miles.

SCRIPT FOR CONVERSATION WITH OFFICIAL

Hello, my name is _____. I am a Pope John Paul II Catholic High School Athletic Trainer/ Head_____Coach. I would like to speak with you regarding our lightning safety procedures. On site we have a lightning detector which I will use to monitor lightning. In accordance with the NATA recommendations, lightning detected within 8-20 miles is considered to pose an imminent threat. Per the Pope John Paul II Catholic High School lightening procedures when the flash/bang method reveals lightning less than 6 miles we strongly recommend suspending activity until the danger of a lightning strike has passed. We have a communication system to inform all participants and any fans.

Chain of Action for Lightning Emergencies



Lightning Detection Procedures for Athletes during Non Supervised Activities

Examples: athletes using facilities in the off season, or outside of regular practice hours

Lightning is a dangerous phenomenon. Athletic teams that practice and compete outdoors are at risk when the weather is inclement. The safest measure to take is to proceed indoors whenever you see thunderclouds forming and remain until the storm passes. Just because you can not see lightning does not mean you are not at risk if you are outdoors. Other warning signs of impending bad weather

include: sudden decrease in temperature, sudden change in humidity, increase in air movement, and visible dark storm clouds (though these are not always present during a lightning strike). The PJPICHS has a lightning detection policy in place for practices and games; however, we are aware that athletes often use high school athletic facilities when there is no supervision by the coaches. In the event athletes are using the facilities without supervision, the PJPICHS Athletic Trainer would like to educate you and encourage you to use FLASH-to-BANG method to monitor the proximity of the lightning. THE FLASH-to-BANG Method is an approximation of the distance of the lightning NO METHOD OF LIGHTNING DETECTION CAN DETECT EVERY STRIKE.

The Flash-bang method of lightning detection:

1. Auditory: Flash-to-Bang Theory

To use this method, count the seconds from the time the lightning “flash” is sighted to when the clap of thunder “bang” is heard. Divide this number by five to obtain how far away (in miles) the lightning is occurring. For example, if fifteen seconds are counted between seeing the “flash” and hearing the “bang”, fifteen divided by five equals three. Therefore, the lightning flash is approximately three miles away.

- ◆ Each five seconds equal one mile
- ◆ If the time between seeing the “flash” and hearing the “bang” is between 15-30 seconds (3-6 miles), teams should take precautions and seek shelter.

*The National Severe Storms Laboratory recommends that by the time the spotter obtains a “flash-to-bang” count of fifteen seconds, all individuals should have left the athletic site and reached “safe shelter”.

ANNOUNCEMENT DURING INCLEMENT WEATHER

May I have your attention? We have been notified of approaching inclement weather. Activity will cease until we have determined it is safe and the risk of lightning is diminished. We advise you to seek shelter in the following areas:

Tornado Policy

Pope John Paul II Catholic High School
September 2009

With the implementation of the Pope John Paul II Catholic High School’s Alert System, employees and administration are notified when weather conditions in Madison County are conducive for a tornado or a tornado has been sighted. Based on this information, the following actions should take place after receiving these notifications.

Tornado Watch

Competition/Practice can continue.

Event Management personnel should inform the game officials and teams of the situation at the next possible opportunity. EM personnel should inform Promotions contact (or directly with Public Address Announcer) that the following announcement should be read over the public address system:

Ladies and gentlemen, your attention please. The National Weather Service has issued a tornado watch for Madison County until _____ o’clock. A tornado watch means that conditions are favorable for the formation of tornadoes. Play will continue at this time, however, for those of you who wish to leave the facility, all gates will be open for your convenience. Please proceed with calm and caution and listen to instructions from stadium personnel as you exit. (And depending on venue, include the sentence – “Be sure to hold onto your ticket stubs for re-entry into the stadium”.)

Tornado Warning

Competition/Practice is suspended.

Event Management personnel should have the game officials stop the game and inform the teams of the situation.

The following announcement should be read over the public address system at outdoor venues:

Ladies and gentlemen, your attention please. The National Weather Service has issued a tornado warning for Madison County until _____ o'clock. A tornado warning means that a tornado has been sighted or indicated on radar in Madison County. Play has been suspended and we now ask that all fans please exit the stadium/venue in an orderly fashion and listen to instructions from school personnel as you exit

Venue Evacuations

- Downtown Rescue Mission(Football Practice)- the gymnasium locker rooms
- Optimist Park/practice and game-Optimist Recreation Center
- Fern Gully practice and game-Fern Bell Gymnasium
- Merrimack Park/Soccer Games-Restrooms
- John Hunt Park/Soccer games/practice- Restrooms
- Soccer practices- Evacuate to closet ground enclosed structure
- Tennis /practice and matches- Evacuate to closet ground enclosed structure
- Cross-Country and Track practice and events- Evacuate to closet ground enclosed structure
- Golf Game/Practice and events- Evacuate to closet ground enclosed structure

The following announcement should be read over the public address system at indoor venues:

Ladies and gentlemen, your attention please. The National Weather Service has issued a tornado warning for Madison County until _____ o'clock. A tornado warning means that a tornado has been sighted or indicated on radar in Madison County. Play has been suspended. During this time, the safest location for you is inside the facility. We ask that all fans please stay in their seat and additional information will be provided when available.

Play will resume when the tornado warning is lifted by the Pope John Paul II Catholic High School's Alert system.

Lightning may also be a factor during this time. Depending on the last lightning strike within a six-mile radius of the facility, suspension of play may continue (until 30 minutes after last strike).