

<p><b>Virginia Tech Sports Medicine</b></p> <p><i>Review: Yearly</i> Director of Athletic Training</p> <p>NCAA Guideline 1d</p>	<p><b>Departmental Policy</b></p> <p><b>Title: Lightning Safety Policy</b></p> <p><b>Section: Event Management</b> Lightning Safety</p>	<p>12</p> <p><b>Key Function:</b> S-A Safety</p> <p>Reviewed: 3/2017</p>
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**POLICY STATEMENT:** Lightning is a dangerous phenomenon. Athletic teams that practice and compete outdoors are at risk when the weather is inclement. To monitor lightning the Athletic Training staff will utilize both the Flash-to-Bang Method and an online weather monitoring system (MxVision Weather Sentry). Our policy is in accordance with the *2013 National Athletic Trainer's Association Position Statement* regarding lightning safety for athletics and recreation.

**PURPOSE:** The Virginia Tech Sports Medicine Department has developed a lightning safety policy to minimize the risk of injury from a lightning strike to our athletes, coaches, support staff and fans.

**ENTITIES TO WHOM THIS POLICY APPLIES:** All events/practices covered by Virginia Tech Sports Medicine.

**PROCEDURE:**

1. The National Athletic Trainers' Association Position Statement for lightning will be followed by Virginia Tech Sports Medicine Staff Athletic Trainer's during practice situations. The coaching staff, sport administrator and officials at each event should inform the Athletic Trainer and Head Coach of any weather conditions approaching. The official and sport administrator make the final decision on removal of athletes from the field. The Athletic Trainer and Head coach should consult about removal of athletes if time permits. If the Athletic Trainer is not present, the coaching staff will follow the lightning policy as written. The coaching staff may take their athletes off the field before the Athletic Trainer clears the field.
2. The National Athletic Trainers' Association Position Statement for lightning will be followed by Virginia Tech Sports Medicine Staff Athletic Trainer's during game situations. A member of the Athletic Training Staff and game official 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. Exceptions will be made for any activity where an Athletic Training staff member is not in attendance, whereby the supervising coach or game official will have the ability to suspend activity.
3. Athletic Trainers will make a list of safe shelters for participants at each venue.
4. Athletic Trainers will make a list of safe shelters for parents and fans at each venue.
5. Prior to a game a member of the Athletic Training staff and/or Sport Administrator 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 Sport Administrator and game officials will then decide whether to discontinue play.
6. Once it is determined that there is danger of a lightning strike, the Sport Administrator will notify the head coach and/or official and subsequently immediately remove all athletes, coaches, and support staff from the playing field or practice area/facility. All activities will be suspended if lightning is detected within 10 miles with the flash-to-bang method or lightning detector. All suspended activities must wait until the lightning detector shows the lightning out of range (10 miles) for the venue. The minimum return time should be 30 minutes after the last lightning strike. Information regarding the event should be immediately communicated to the following departments; Game Ops, Facilities/Grounds, Sports Medicine, Concessions, Sports Information and Marketing.
7. 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.)
8. Local weather forecasts will be monitored via computer using the internet (MxVision WeatherSentry Online) or via television (recommend NOAA or WTOctv radar) if available at individual venues.
9. All individuals have the right to leave an athletic site, without repercussion or penalty, in order to seek a safe structure or location if they feel they are in danger from impending lightning activity.
10. No one is permitted to use the showers or plumbing facilities and landline telephones during thunderstorm activities. They are permitted to use cellular phones to contact parents for transportation.

11. If available, an announcement should be made over the speaker system on seeking safe shelters for fans and participants. During a competition, once the decision to suspend activity has been made, a representative of the athletic department will announce via the PA system.

Announce the location of safe shelter for that venue and offer the following 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.
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.

**Safe Structures:**

Soccer/Lacrosse Game Facility	Report to	Rector Field House
Frank Mosley Practice Field	Report to	Rector Field House
English Field	Report to	Home Team (James C. Weaver Baseball Center) Visiting Team (Rector Field House)
Softball Facility	Report to	Rector Field House
Johnson Miller Outdoor Track Complex	Report to	Rector Field House
Cross Country Course	Report to	Rector Field House
Burrows-Burleson Tennis Courts	Report to	Burrows-Burleson Tennis Center
Football Practice Field	Report to	Football Indoor Practice Facility
Worsham Field	Report to	Home Team (Lane Stadium Halftime Room) Visiting Team (Lane Stadium Visiting Locker Room)

In the event that a safe structure cannot be reached, any vehicle with a hard metal roof will provide adequate protection. Avoid touching the sides of the vehicle and the steering wheel during a lightening storm.