

• **Lightning Safety Policy for Pearland ISD**

The first preventative measure to mitigate the lightning hazard is for the coaching/athletic training staff to check the weather report each day before practice or event. The second preventative measure is to know the location of the closest shelter to the athletic site and how long it takes to reach that shelter. A shelter is defined as any sturdy building that has metal plumbing or wiring, or both, to electrically ground the structure, (i.e. not a shed or a shack). In the absence of a sturdy building as described above, any vehicle with a hard metal roof, i.e. not a convertible or a golf cart, with the windows rolled up. The third preventative measure is to know how close lightning is occurring. The most convenient way to estimate how far away lightning activity is the "flash-to-bang" method. Simply stated, count the seconds between seeing the lightning "flash" and hearing the clap of thunder "bang". Divide this number by five to determine how far away (in miles) lightning is occurring.

1. If the "flash-to-bang" interval is decreasing rapidly, and the storm is approaching your location, or if the "flash-to-bang" count approaches thirty (30) seconds, all outdoor activities must cease. All persons must immediately leave the athletic site and seek safe shelter. The locker room shower and plumbing facilities do not provide safe shelter and should not be used during this time.
2. Locate shelter as quickly as possible.
3. Stay away from tall or individual trees, lone objects (i.e., light or flag poles), metal objects (i.e., metal fences or bleachers), standing pools of water, and open fields. Avoid being the tallest object on a field. Do not take shelter under a single tree.
4. If there is no safe shelter within reasonable distance, crouch in a thick grove of small trees surrounded by taller trees or in a dry ditch. Crouching with only your feet touching the ground and keeping your feet close together, wrap your arms around your knees and lower your head to minimize your body surface area. Do not lie flat!
5. If you feel your hair stand on end or your skin tingle or hear crackling noises, immediately crouch to minimize your body surface area.
6. Allow 30 minutes to pass after the last sound of thunder or flash of lightning before resuming any interscholastic athletic activity.
7. Do not use the telephone unless there is an emergency.

8. Lightning strike victims do not carry an electrical charge. CPR is safe for the responder and has been shown to be effective in reviving lightning strike victims.
9. Pay much more attention to the lightning threat than to the rain. It need not be raining for lightning to strike; lightning can strike far from the rain shaft.

* It is imperative to begin and sustain CPR as soon as possible following a lightning strike. In triage situations this task becomes formidable, because first responders are trained to treat the "living" and leave the "dead" alone. In lightning trauma, the opposite is true. Studies have recorded patient revival following prolonged lack of pulse and apnea. First aid to the victims who appear dead can reverse cardiopulmonary arrest. Athletes who are struck by lightning and are unconscious have fixed and dilated pupils, cold extremities, and absent pulses and breath sounds; they must have CPR administered immediately, because these signs are common to victims who recover fully. An athletic trainer must also always consider possible cervical spine trauma when treating unconscious victims. Even though lightning strike victims do not carry an electrical charge, the rescuer should be concerned with the possibility of a second strike in the immediate area.

* The decision to remove a team or individuals from an athletic site in the event of dangerous and imminent lightning activity is up to the coach supervising the activity. The safety of any team or student-athlete ultimately rests with that coach. Whenever possible, the full time certified athletic training staff will advise the coach supervising the activity as to the danger and proximity of the lightning threat. However, the responsibility still remains with supervising coaches to remove their teams or individuals from a field or event site.