

## Lightning Safety Policy

Lightning is the second leading cause of storm deaths in the U.S., killing more people than tornadoes or hurricanes (Curran, et. al., 1997).

### Functions of Lightning Detection System

**This is an automatic system that enables itself upon weather threats in the area.**  
**It is not controlled by a person.**

1. When lightning approaches a six mile radius from Hillsdale, the Lightning Detection System will activate a flashing light and an alarm will sound for approximately twenty seconds.
2. **As soon as the Lightning Warning System enables, everyone MUST remove themselves from their outdoor activity and seek shelter or face severe penalties.**
3. The flashing light will then continue for thirty minutes after the last lightning strike within a six mile radius; all fields must remain cleared through the duration of the activated warning system.
4. When the warning alarm sounds a short, steady tone and the flashing light goes out it is permissible to reenter the field.
5. **Under absolutely no circumstances is anyone allowed back on the field prior to the Lightning Warning System disabling itself.**
6. This system may reactivate at any time throughout the duration that the fields are open depending on the storm activity and its whereabouts. **There are no false alarms.**
7. **Members of the Public using the parks and fields on an individual, unorganized basis are also subject to the same policy.**
8. **All protective measures must be adhered to at all times.**

**Recommendation:** If you hear thunder as a storm approaches and the alarm system has not yet activated, it is recommended that you use this leeway time to organize your group to safety. Lightning has been known to strike up to ten miles away.

**Recommendation:** For places of safety during a thunderstorm, a vehicle with a solid metal roof and metal sides offers some protection. Close the windows, lean away from the sides of the car, and keep your hands in your lap. Do not touch the steering wheel, ignition, gear shifter or radio.

At Centennial and Memorial Fields, the rest rooms and field house offer some protection. Stay away from plumbing, electrical outlets and appliances.

The George White, Smith and Meadowbrook fields do not have a safe outdoor structure to provide shelter. If the school is opened to the public, permission must be provided by a member of the school's staff to seek shelter inside.

Beechwood and Stonybrook Fields do not have a safe outdoor structure to provide shelter.

## Five Levels of Lightning Safety

- 1 - **Plan ahead:** coaches should watch the weather forecast prior to using the field.
- 2 - **Use the '30-30 Rule':** after you see lightning, count the seconds until you hear thunder. If this time 30 seconds or less, go inside. Stay inside until 30 minutes after the last strike of thunder.
- 3 - **Avoid Dangerous Locations:** DO NOT go under trees to keep dry in a thunderstorm! Avoid: elevated places, open areas, tall isolated objects, water activities, dugouts, open areas such as fields, open vehicles, unprotected open buildings, and large structures such as fences or bleachers.
- 4 - **Lightning Crouch (desperate last resort):** If the lightning is about to strike near you, it will sometimes give a warning of a few seconds or less. Sometimes your hair will stand upright, your skin will tingle, light metal objects will vibrate, or you will hear a crackling static-like "kee-kee" sound. If this happens and you're in a group, spread out so there are several body lengths between each person. If one person is struck, the others may not be hit, and give first aid. Once you've spread out, use the lightning crouch: put your feet together, squat down, tuck your head and cover your ears. When the immediate threat of lightning has passed, continue heading to the safest spot possible. Remember this is a last resort; you are much safer having followed the previous steps and not gotten into this high-risk situation.
- 5 - **First Aid:** Lightning deaths are caused by cardiac arrest or the person has stopped breathing from the cardiac arrest. Start CPR or rescue breathing if the person has no pulse or is not breathing, respectively. Have someone call 911. Use an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) if one is available.

## Penalties for Disregarding the Lightning Protection System

**Organized activities:** The umpire, coach, coordinator or adult in charge is responsible to ensure that their group follows the Lightning Safety Policy. Disregarding the policy subjects the umpire, coach, coordinator or adult in charge to a lifetime suspension of responsibility regarding all Hillsdale Recreation activities, and privileges including using the fields and parks for organized activity.