

Heartland Lightning Policy

Rules for Lightning Safety

- a) Establish a chain of command that identifies who is to make the call to remove individuals from the field.
- b) Name a designated weather watcher (A person who actively looks for the signs of threatening weather and notifies the chain of command if severe weather becomes dangerous).
- c) Have a means of monitoring local weather forecasts and warnings.
- d) Designate a safe shelter for each venue. See examples below.
- e) Use the Flash-to-Bang count to determine when to go to safety. By the time the flash-to-bang count approaches thirty seconds all individuals should be already inside a safe structure. See method of determining Flash-to-Bang count below.

Once activities have been suspended, wait at least thirty minutes following the last sound of thunder or lightning flash prior to resuming an activity or returning outdoors. Avoid being the highest point in an open field, in contact with, or proximity to the highest point, as well as being on the open water. Do not take shelter under or near trees, flagpoles, or light poles. Assume that lightning safe position (crouched on the ground weight on the balls of the feet, feet together, head lowered, and ears covered) for individuals who feel their hair stand on end, skin tingle, or hear "crackling" noises. Do not lie flat on the ground. Observe the following basic first aid procedures in managing victims of a lightning strike:

Activate local EMS, Lightning victims do not "carry a charge" and are safe to touch, if necessary, move the victim with care to a safer location. Evaluate airway, breathing, and circulation, and begin CPR if necessary. Evaluate and treat for hypothermia, shock, fractures, and/or burns.

All individuals have the right to leave an athletic site to seek a safe structure if the person feels in danger of impending lightning activity, without fear of repercussions or penalty from anyone.

Safe Shelter:

A safe location is any substantial, frequently inhabited building. The building should have four solid walls (not a dug out), electrical and telephone wiring, as well as plumbing, all of which aid in grounding a structure.

Flash-to-Bang:

To use the flash-to-bang method, begin counting when sighting a lightning flash. Counting is stopped when the associated bang (thunder) is heard. Divide this count by five to determine the distance to the lightning flash (in miles). For example, a flash-to-bang count of thirty seconds equates to a distance of six miles.

Lightning has struck from as far away as 10 miles from the storm center.