

CCPS Lightning Safety Protocols

Carroll County Public Schools is committed to the health and safety of our students and staff. We use updated technology to detect real time lightning through Earth Networks' Outdoor Alerting System (OAS). The OAS is powered by Earth Networks' Total Lightning Network, which is capable of detecting both in-cloud and cloud-to ground lightning. We have lightning detection systems on each of our high schools. When lightning is detected in an 8 mile radius of the school, a horn sounds for 15 seconds alerting all people in the area to seek shelter. At the same time, a strobe light will be activated on the detection system that will remain in effect for the entire at-risk time frame. All coaches, athletic trainers, advisors of extracurricular activities, and administrators present will immediately suspend all outdoor activities and instruct all people in the vicinity to seek shelter. Principals, athletic directors, athletic trainers, and active coaches and extracurricular directors in the alert system will be notified immediately via text and/or email of the lightning detection on their phones and/or computers.

No CCPS personnel receiving the alert shall ignore, disregard, or delay clearing the outside area immediately upon lightning detection. Under NFHS and MPSSAA rules, officials have control of an athletic contest once it begins and may discontinue or delay a contest whenever they declare a health and safety hazard. However, our local officials associations have been directed to evacuate immediately and seek shelter when the alarm sounds. Once lightning has not been detected by the system in the area for 30 minutes, there will be three 5-second horn alerts, along with an all-clear signal to administrators' and coaches'/advisors' participating phones and computers, that it is safe to return to the outdoor area. Any coach, advisor, or administrator may evacuate an outside area during a practice or warm-up period whenever they declare it unsafe and may lead all participants to the nearest shelter.

Furthermore, regardless of whether an OAS siren sounds, if lightning is seen or thunder is heard by anyone conducting outside activities, such activities should be suspended immediately, and all people outside shall be directed to seek shelter. The 30 minute rule shall still apply in such cases.