



## **San Bernardino City Unified School District Elementary, Middle & High Schools Lightning Indicator Protocol**

### **Purpose:**

Each year 25 million lightning flashes occur, making lightning a dangerous yet frequent hazard. San Bernardino County annually encounters severe-storm activity, which has prompted the district to educate, and prevent any threat, or hazardous situations. The committee consisted of the districts Safety/Emergency Manager (lead). This protocol is currently best practice and covers all outdoor activities involving SBCUSD elementary, middle & high school activities, including field trips. This protocol and routine including lightning and thunderstorm alerts should be provided to staff by each site administrator.

### **WEATHER MONITORING PROCEDURE/NOTIFICATION:**

The Safety office is responsible for monitoring forecasted weather, including lightning and thunderstorms. This generally begins three to four days in advance of weather and continues through the weather using a combination of decline in temperature, wind and low precipitation to determine the cold index (*how cold feels*). Remote monitoring occurs through the use of [www.weatherbug.com](http://www.weatherbug.com) and the national weather service (NWS) [www.weather.gov](http://www.weather.gov). The Safety office monitors several weather stations located on district properties, as well as other local stations, which provide real-time and detailed information.

Other weather related temperature readings such as the weather channel, radio/news broadcasts or cell phone applications (*with the exception of WeatherBug*) are not permitted, as they may not yield accurate results.

### **CHAIN OF COMMAND / ACTIVITY ADJUSTMENT AUTHORITIES**

The decision to cancel, postpone or modify outdoor activities in the event of lightning / thunder storms may be made by the Site Administrator, Safety / Emergency Manager, Coordinator of Health Services or affected PE Teacher / Coach. The information below is a guide to determining lightning, temperature triggers and provides recommendations for response and activity restrictions. If caution is not exercised, conditions could lead to unwanted situations.

## **Lightning/Thunderstorm RESPONSIBILITIES:**

The Safety office is responsible for monitoring forecasted weather, including lightning and thunder storms which has encouraged the district to establish a conventional outline on how to proceed when these incidents occur. Environmental risks include management of lightning and thunderstorm safety. It is recommended for the prevention of any injury within the SBCUSD involving athletics and recreational activities, including any and all field trips. Principals are encouraged to communicate with parents about any active safety situations involving students.

- Late spring is usually the most popular time of year for outdoor activities but is also when lightning is most prevalent. Stay safe outdoors by following these do's and don'ts.
1. Establish a chain of command and identify who will be making any and all decisions. Postpone outdoor activities if weather is eminent. Assign a staff member to monitor weather conditions before and during activities.
  2. Identify a safe, fully enclosed building such as school, library or other habitable building. Use these buildings for safety when lightning begins.
    - Do not evacuate to open structures, including picnic, park, bus, storage sheds, tents, dugouts, refreshment stands, and any open area.
  3. Stand away from showers, sinks, locker rooms, indoor pools, appliances and electronics. Call EMS if someone suffers a lightning related injury. If necessary move victim indoors.
    - Do not stand near open water, on elevated areas or under tall objects, such as trees, poles, and towers.
  4. Thirty-minute rule. Once play has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or flash of lightning is witnessed prior to resuming play.
    - Any and all activities can resume once thunder / lightning is not heard within 5 miles of location / event, and 30 minutes after the last strike of lightning seen.
  5. Do not believe myths- lightning victims do not carry a charge and they are safe to touch in case of an emergency situation.

If weather presents danger to a student, each site should plan accordingly and put into effect this safety plan and communicate to families. Any questions, or for more information regarding prevention, first aid, cold-related health conditions, contact Safety / Emergency Manager at (909) 381-1192.