

Guidelines on Handling Practices and Contests During Lighting or Thunder Disturbances



These guidelines provide a procedure to those responsible in making decisions concerning the suspension and restarting of practices and contests based on the presence of lighting and thunder.

PROACTIVE PLANNING

1. The Certified Athletic Trainer, Athletic Director, and Coaches will monitor local weather conditions before and during practices and contests.
2. In the event of evacuation, teams will move to a safer place.
 - a) Safe places at the high school and middle school would include the following: Cafeteria, Locker room, and Gymnasium.
Alternate – School Bus
3. Criteria for suspension and resumption of play:
 - a) When thunder is heard or lightning is seen*, the leading edge of the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Play will be suspended for 30 minutes and the outdoor activity would be vacated to the previously designated safe location immediately.
 - b) 30-minute rule. Once play is suspended, wait 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or lightning is witnessed* prior to resuming play.
 - c) Any subsequent thunder or lightning* after the beginning for the 30-minute count will reset the clock and another 30-minute clock should begin.
 - d) When lightning-detection devices or mobile phone apps are available, this technology is used to assist in making a decision to suspend play if a lightning strike is noted to be within 10 miles of the event location. However, you should never depend on the reliability of these devices. Hearing thunder or seeing lightning* should always take precedence over information from a mobile app or lightning-detection device.

**-At night, under certain atmospheric conditions. Lighting flashes may be seen from distant storms. In these cases, it may be safe to continue an event. If no thunder can be heard and flashes are low on the horizon, the storm may not pose a threat. Independently verified lightning detection information would help eliminate any uncertainty.*

This information is recommended by the National Federation of State High School Associations