

Delta State University Athletic Department Lightning Safety Policy

Lightning is a dangerous phenomenon. Athletic teams that practice and compete outdoors are at risk when the weather is inclement. The Athletic Training Staff at Delta State University has developed a lightning safety policy to minimize the risk of injury from a lightning strike to Delta State University athletes, coaches, support staff and the fans. To monitor lightning the Athletic Training Staff will utilize both the Flash-to-Bang method AND a SkyScan Lightning Detector. Our policy is in accordance to the NCAA recommendations regarding lightning safety.

Please follow this policy in the event of severe weather when no lightning is visible. This is to include tornadoes, thunderstorms, or any other type of adverse weather.

GENERAL POICY: A member of the Athletic Training Staff (certified or apprentice) will monitor the weather and make the decision to suspend activity in the event of imminent lightning. Exceptions will be made for golf, tennis and cross-country, whereby the head coach will have the ability to suspend activity in the absence of a member of the Athletic Training Staff. The decision to suspend activity will be based on:

- Two subsequent readings on the Sky Scan Lightning Detector in the 8-20 mile range regardless of the presence of visible lightning. (This device is portable and will be in possession of the Athletic Training Staff member).

AND/OR

- Utilization of the Flash-to-Bang method revealing lightning within 6 miles (a 30 second count between the flash of lightning and the bang of thunder).

PRIOR TO COMPETITION: A member of the Athletic Training Staff will greet the officials, explain that we have a means to monitor the lightning, and offer to notify the officials during the game if there is imminent danger from the lightning.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUSPENSION OF ACTIVITY: Once it is determined there is danger of a lightning strike the Athletic Training Staff member will notify the head coach and or official and subsequently (via horn or whistle) summon athletes from the playing surface.

EVACUATION OF THE PLAYING FIELD: Immediately following the announcement of activity suspension, all athletes, coaches, officials and support personnel are to evacuate to an enclosed grounded structure.

If you are unable to reach shelter immediately, seek a flat area (do not choose an open area where you will be the highest object) or a ditch without water. Crouch down wrapping your arms around your knees, lean forward on the balls of your feet, lower your head and wait for the storm to pass.

AT DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY:

ALL GAME PERSONNEL

Football game or practice: Evacuate to Chadwick-Dickson

Tennis match or practice:

- Coliseum Courts evacuate to Walter-Sillers Coliseum or golf course clubhouse
- Court of Governors Courts evacuate to Wyatt Gym

Softball game or practice: Evacuate to Chadwick-Dickson or softball locker room complex

Baseball game or practice: Evacuate to Bryce-Griffis Indoor Facility or Chadwick-Dickson

Swim meet or practice: Exit pool and sit in grandstands

Cross-country race or practice:

- Evacuate to Walter-Sillers Coliseum or golf course clubhouse
- Ditch without water
- Group of trees*

Golf match or practice:

- Evacuate to Clubhouse
- Evacuate to Walter-Sillers Coliseum
- Group of trees*

Soccer game or practice:

- * Evacuate to Chadwick-Dickson Fieldhouse

GOLFERS SHOULD DROP THEIR CLUBS AND REMOVE SHOES WITH METAL SPIKES.

REMEMBER: an automobile, golf cart, or open-sided shelter may not protect you from a lightning strike so these are not adequate shelters.

*Individuals should not stand in groups or near a single tree. There should be 15ft between individuals. If possible seek shelter near a group of smaller trees.

AWAY EVENTS: A member of the host institution's Athletic Training Staff will discuss emergency procedures and emergency shelters with the visiting athletic trainer who can then inform their coaches and team. If no member of the Athletic Training Staff is available for the visiting team, the host will inform the head coach.

EVACUATION OF THE STANDS: During a competition once the official signals to suspend activity, a member of the Sports Information staff will announce via the PA system the following message. 1) Fans are advised to immediately seek shelter in an enclosed-grounded shelter, 2) REMEMBER: an automobile, golf cart, or open-sided shelter may not protect you from a lightning strike so these are not adequate shelters.

Football Game: Home fans evacuate to Walter-Sillers Coliseum
Visiting fans evacuate to Bryce-Griffis Indoor Facility

Softball Game: Evacuate to Chadwick-Dickson

Baseball Game: Evacuate to Bryce-Griffis Indoor Facility or Chadwick-Dickson

Tennis Match: Coliseum Courts evacuate to Walter-Sillers Coliseum or golf course
Clubhouse
Court of Governors Courts: Evacuate to Wyatt Gym

Cross-Country Meet: Evacuate to Walter-Sillers Coliseum

Golf Match: Evacuate to Walter-Sillers Coliseum or clubhouse

Soccer Game: Evacuate to Chadwick-Dickson or Dorgan Center

RESUMPTION OF ACTIVITY: Activity may resume once a member of the Athletic Training Staff gives permission. This decision will be based on:

- Two consecutive readings of lightning strikes 20-40 miles away on the Sky Scan Lightning Detector and none occurring within the 8-20 mile range.

AND/OR

- Fifteen minutes AFTER the last lightning strike within a 6-mile range using the Flash-to-Bang method.

DIRECTIONS FOR LIGHTNING DETECTION

1. Prior to practice or competition, monitor weather forecast to include calling local agencies for up to date information.
2. Monitor the weather for the following: sudden decrease in temperature, increase in air movement, sudden increase in humidity, visible dark clouds (though these do not have to be present for a lightning strike to occur).
3. Communicate with officials and/or head coach prior to activity about potential inclement weather and the monitoring system in place.
4. Locate the SkyScan unit in an area removed from other electronic devices or machinery, which could cause a false triggering.

DIRECTIONS FOR USING THE SKYSCAN UNIT

1. Place the SkyScan in the vertical position.
2. Turn the unit on.
3. Turn the tone function on by pressing the tone button for one second. (This must be done every time the unit is turned on).
4. Each lightning stroke detected will result in an audible tone and the corresponding light indicator lighting up. The user must be able to hear the tone and see the indicator light up.
5. The audible tone will sound for approximately one second and the indicator light will blink for 25 seconds.
6. Activity will be suspended when the SkyScan unit detects two consecutive lighting strokes within the 8-20 mile range.

The Flash-to-Bang Method of lightning detection:

Auditory: Flash-to-Bang Theory

To use this method, count the seconds from the time the lightning “flash” is sighted to when the clap of thunder “bang” is heard. Divide this number by five to obtain how far away (in miles) the lightning is occurring. For example, if fifteen seconds are counted between seeing the “flash” and hearing the “bang”, fifteen divided by five equals three. Therefore, the lightning flash is approximately three miles away.

--Every five seconds equals one mile

--If the time between seeing the “flash” and hearing the “bang” is between 15-30 seconds (3-6 miles); teams should take precautions and seek shelter.

*The National Severe Storms Laboratory recommends that by the time the spotter obtains a “flash-to-bang” count of fifteen seconds, all individuals should have left the athletic site and reached a safe shelter.

Lightning Detection Procedures for Athletes During Non-Supervised Activities

Examples: athletes using facilities in the off season, or outside of regular practice hours
Lightning is a dangerous phenomenon. Athletic teams that practice and compete outdoors are at risk when the weather is inclement. The safest measure taken is to proceed indoors whenever you see thunderclouds forming and remain until the storm passes. Just because you can not see lightning does not mean you are not at risk if you are outdoors. Other warning signs of impending bad weather include sudden decrease in temperature, sudden change in humidity, increase in air movement, and visible dark storm clouds (though these are not always present during a lightning strike). The Athletic Training Staff has a lightning detection policy in place for practices and games; however, we are aware that athletes often use DSU’s athletic facilities without supervision. The Athletic Training Staff would like to educate you and encourage you to use the Flash-to-Bang Method to monitor the proximity of the lightning. The Flash-to-Bang Method is an approximation of the distance of the lightning; **NO METHOD OF LIGHTNING DETECTION CAN DETECT EVERY STRIKE.**

OTHER LIGHTNING SAFETY TIPS:

1. There should be no contact with metal objects (bleachers, fences, golf clubs, bats)
2. Avoid standing in a group and under a single tree.
3. If there is no other shelter you may seek refuge in a hardtop vehicle. It is not the rubber tires that protect you from lightning; it is the hard top metal roof that dissipates the lightning around the vehicle. (NCAA, 1999)
4. The existence of blue skies and/or absence of rain are not protection from lightning. Lightning can strike 10 miles from the rain shaft. (NCAA, 1999)
5. DO NOT LIE FLAT ON THE GROUND.
6. Avoid using a land line telephone.
7. Persons who have been struck by lightning do not carry an electrical charge. Therefore, you can provide care. CPR is what is most often required. Be sure to move the victim to a safe location.
8. If in a forest, seek shelter in a low area under a thick grove of small trees.

SCRIPT FOR CONVERSATION WITH OFFICIAL:

Hello, my name is _____. I am a member of the Delta State University Athletic Training Staff. I would like to speak with you regarding our lightning safety procedures. On site we have a lightning detector which I will use to monitor lightning. In accordance to NCAA recommendations, lightning detected within 10-15 miles is considered to pose an imminent threat. Per DSU's lightning safety policy, when the lightning detector reveals (2) consecutive strikes within the 8-20 range OR the Flash-to-Bang Method reveals lightning less than (6) miles we strongly recommend suspending activity until the danger of a lightning strike has passed. We have a communication system in place to inform all participants and fans.

PA ANNOUNCEMENT DURING INCLEMENT WEATHER

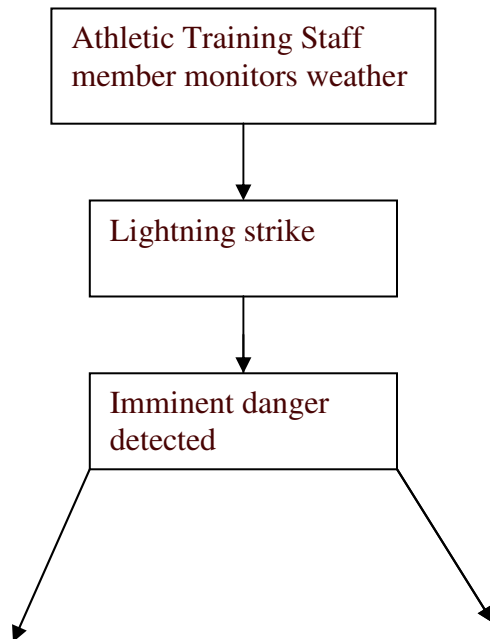
May I have your attention? We have been notified of approaching inclement weather. Activity will cease until we have determined it is safe and the risk of lightning is diminished. We advise you to seek shelter in the following areas:

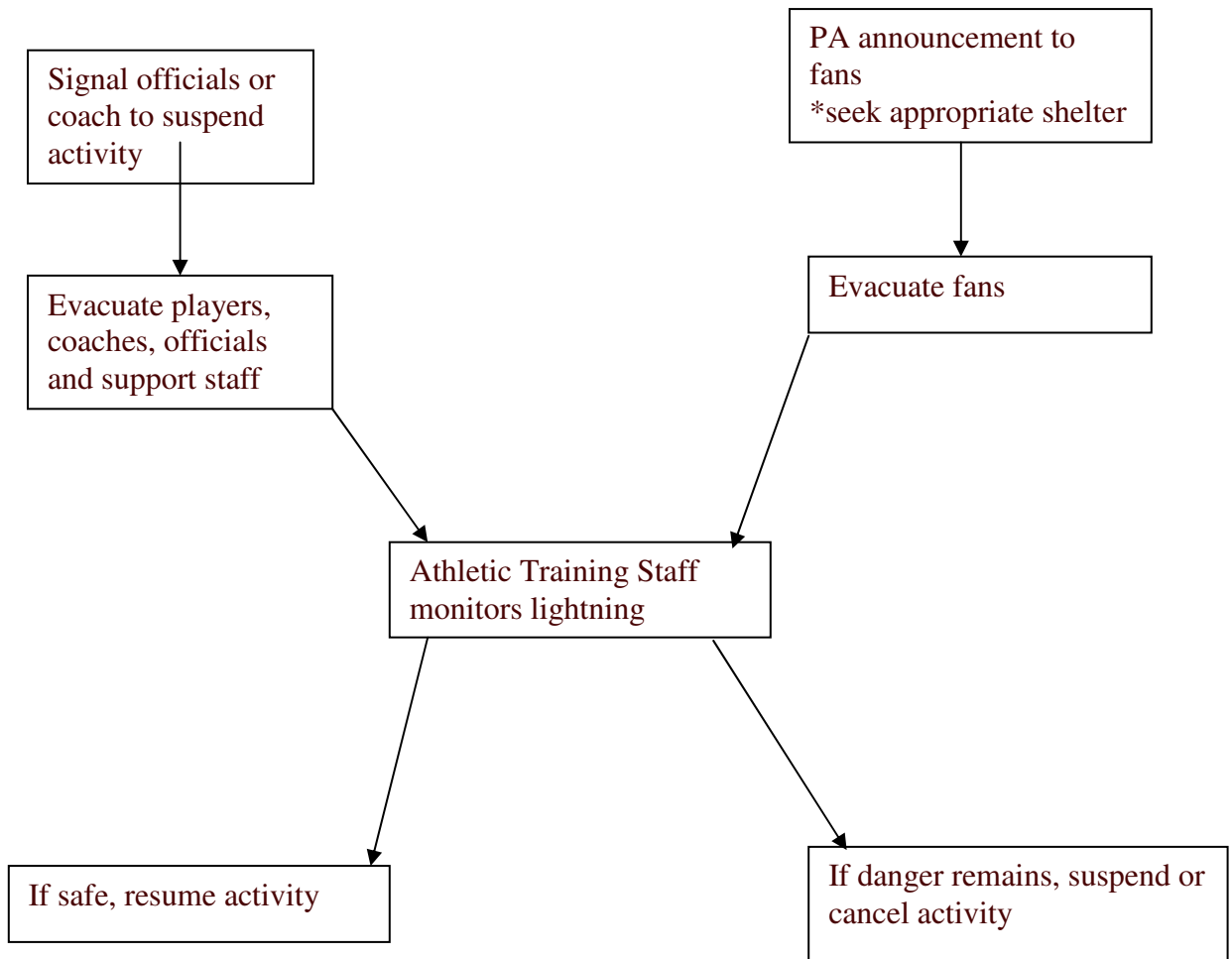
At Delta State:

1. Football Game: Home fans evacuate to Walter-Sillers Coliseum
Away fans evacuate to Bryce-Griffis Indoor Facility
2. Tennis Match: at Coliseum Courts evacuate to Walter-Sillers Coliseum
at Court of Governors Courts evacuate to Wyatt Gym
3. Softball Game: evacuate to Chadwick-Dickson
4. Baseball Game: evacuate to Bryce-Griffis Indoor Facility or Chadwick-Dickson
5. Cross Country Race: suitable structure, ditch without water, group of trees*,
evacuate to Walter-Sillers Coliseum
6. Golf Match: evacuate to clubhouse, restroom, ditch without water, group of trees*
or evacuate to Walter-Sillers Coliseum
7. Soccer Game: evacuate to the Chadwick-Dickson Fieldhouse or the Dorgan Center

Though protection from lightning is not guaranteed, you may seek shelter in an automobile with a hard top.

Thank you for your cooperation.





COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

As a member of the Delta State University Athletic Department, I attest that I have read, understand, and will adhere to the aforementioned lightning safety policy.

Signature

Date

