

HSC LIGHTNING POLICY

Lightning is the most dangerous and frequently encountered weather hazard that most people face each year. There are approximately 25 million cloud-to-ground lightning strikes in the United States each year resulting in nearly 100 deaths and 500 injuries. Most incidents occur between May and September, and nearly 80 percent occur between 10 a.m. and 7 p.m.

Lightning-strike casualties during sports and recreational activities have risen alarmingly in recent decades and occur most often on Sunday and Saturday, respectively, which coincides with the time that most outdoor-sports activities occur.

The problem is that lightning threats will occur several times during a year in most areas, so lightning becomes an inconvenience for soccer activities. With a limited amount of time for practices and games, it's a huge nuisance to have to stop everything, delay a game or practice, and then restart. But the threat is real.

Coaches, referees, tournament and club officials have the overall responsibility for the safety of their players during practices and games. Before game day check the HSC website for information on the forecasted weather conditions and the chance of thunderstorms. Parents or players should also remind coaches of approaching weather if it is apparent that the coaches are so immersed in the game that they are unaware of the possible danger.

If you hear thunder your site is in danger of a lightning strike. Play/practice should be suspended and everyone evacuated to safe shelter until 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard. Safe shelter includes sturdy buildings or inside a vehicle with windows closed.

AVOID: Isolated trees, light poles or other tall objects, bodies of water, sheds, fences, bleachers, convertibles, tractors, bikes and motorcycles. Avoid leaning against vehicles.

- If lightning threatens and a person cannot reach suitable shelter, he or she should assume a lightning-safe position: crouch on the ground with weight on the balls of the feet, keeping feet together and the head lowered and ears covered. Assume this position if you feel your hair stand on end, your skin tingle, or you hear crackling noises. Never lie flat on the ground.
- Do not stay in a group. Stay several yards away from other people. Don't share a bleacher bench or huddle with other players.

First Aid for Lightning Strikes

- Call 911. Get medical attention as quickly as possible.
- If the victim has stopped breathing, begin rescue breathing. If the heart has stopped beating, a trained person should give CPR. If the person has a pulse and is breathing, address any other injuries.
- Check for burns in two places. The injured person has received an electric shock and may be burned, both where struck and where the electricity left their body. Being struck by lightning can also cause nervous system damage, broken bones, and loss of hearing or eyesight. People struck by lightning carry no electrical charge and cannot shock other people.