



Upper St. Clair School District Lightning Policy

NATA offers a proactive approach to lightning safety with new guidelines.

On average, lightning kills approximately 100 people each year in this country, while many hundreds more are injured. In addition, lightning imposes an enormous and widespread threat to the physically active population, due in part to the prevalence of thunderstorms in the afternoon to early evening during the late spring to early fall.

The National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA) has released the following guidelines that are based on the NCAA's recommendations. Follow them when participating in outside athletic or recreational activities.

Each Allegheny Health Network high school will adopt a school specific lightning policy based on these guidelines:

- Establish a chain of command that identifies who is to make the call to remove individuals from the field.
- Name a designated weather watcher: a person who actively looks for the signs of threatening weather and notifies the chain of command if severe weather becomes dangerous.
- Have a means of monitoring local weather forecasts and warnings. If lightning is within 6 miles, retreat to a safe shelter. All students should remain inside until safe to return outdoors.
- Designate a safe shelter for each venue.
- Use the Flash-to-Bang count to determine when to go to safety. By the time the flash-to-bang count approaches 48 seconds all individuals should be already inside a safe structure. Flash-to-bang means to count the number of seconds between the lightning strike and the sound of thunder. That count, divided by 5, tells the approximate distance to the lightning from your location.
- Once activities have been suspended, you must wait at least 30 minutes following the last sound of thunder or lightning flash prior to resuming an activity or returning outdoors. If your time count approaches anything less than 30 minutes (ie 20-29 minutes) and lightning is seen again or thunder heard, then the 30 minute count and waiting period must start over.
- Avoid being the highest point in an open field, in contact with, or proximity to the highest point, as well as being on the open water. Do not take shelter under or near trees, flagpoles, or light poles.



- If caught outdoors and away from shelter (cross country, golf), assume the lightning safe position (crouched on the ground, weight on the balls of the feet, feet together, head lowered, and ears covered).
- Individuals may feel their hair stand on end, skin tingle, or hear “crackling” noises. Do not lie flat on the ground.

Observe the following basic first aid procedures in managing victims of a lightning strike:

- o Survey the scene for safety
- o Activate local EMS
- o Lightning victims do not ‘carry a charge’ and are safe to touch
- o If necessary and possible, move the victim with care to a safer location
- o Evaluate airway, breathing, and circulation, and begin CPR if necessary
- o Evaluate and treat for hypothermia, shock, fractures, and/or burns

· All individuals have the right to leave an athletic site in order to seek a safe structure if the person feels in danger of impending lightning activity, without fear of repercussions or penalty from anyone.

Tornado and/or Severe Thunderstorm Watches: This means that the atmospheric conditions are suitable for the formation of these storms. Be OBSERVANT of changing weather conditions and be ready to take your team to appropriate shelter.

Tornado and/or Severe Thunderstorm WARNINGS: This means that A) a tornado has been spotted in the vicinity of the school or B) a severe thunderstorm is definitely headed in our direction. In either case, you MUST take your team to immediate and appropriate shelter and remain there until the warning has expired. If possible, tune-in to the National Weather Service broadcast, use appropriate cell phone apps, or check online.