

Cascade Collegiate Conference Inclement Weather Guidelines for the Cascade Collegiate Conference recognizes the importance of a safe environment for all participants. The certified athletic trainers of the Cascade Collegiate Conference have developed these general guidelines and a chain of command for suspending outdoor athletic events in cases of inclement weather, specifically thunder and lightning, but which may also include other environmental conditions that may be dangerous for participants and spectators (conditions such as high winds, hail, and tornado activity are also life threatening conditions where athletic activity should be suspended). Inclement weather may include one or all of these conditions. This document includes pertinent information from the NAIA Inclement Weather Guidelines as well as policies and procedures from the Cascade Collegiate Conference Certified Athletic Trainers for its member institutions to follow in inclement weather situations. [I.] Players, Coaches, Spectators, and Event Officials, and Administrators at an event should be reminded/informed over the PA System throughout the event that lightning safety is important. Simple slogans like **“When thunder roars go indoors,”** or **“If you can hear it, clear it.”** The host event ATC or per-assigned designee “weather watcher” usually has the primary responsibility to actively Monitoring of Weather Conditions. The “weather watcher” should watch/monitor local weather forecasts and know/understand local weather patterns. In addition they should utilize the National Weather Service NWS www.weather.gov ,NOAA, Portable weather stations (such as Kestrel) or other real time weather information devices or apps such as WeatherSentry Sports and Recreational monitoring system by DTN, The Thor Guard System. Additionally, weather apps like WeatherBug (including Spark), or the Weather Channel Apps are highly rated tools tha provide helpful information to inform critical safety decisions. **The Medical Director (on site physician) or ATC has Unchallenged Authority to Suspend Play!** The MD or ATC will Activate the Chain of Command which will implement the predetermined action plan for both players and spectator safety. **When lightning is within 8 – 10 miles - steps need to be taken to evacuate players, spectators and game officials from the venue until the threat of the storm has passed.** A useful equation suspending activities with a **“flash to bang” count of 50 seconds or less (meaning the storm is ten [10] miles away).** To use this method, count the seconds from the time the lightning is sighted to when a clap of thunder is heard. Divide this number by five to determine how far away (in miles) the lightning is occurring. Example: 45 second count = 8 mile distance.

[II.] Leave the athletic fields and seek SAFE shelter areas – IMMEDIATELY! Safe shelters are defined as fully enclosed buildings. In the event that a fully enclosed building is unavailable, buses, cars, and vans are considered safe alternatives. Note that **“Unsafe Locations”** include structures like shelters, dugouts, storage sheds, picnic areas, tents, concessions, press boxes, etc. These areas should be determined by the certified athletic trainer at each institution. Individual institutions will incorporate their own policies relating to specific safe areas, areas to avoid, and unsafe areas.

[III.] Activities shall be suspended until at least 30 minutes following the last sighting of lightning strike and sound of thunder. The 30 – minute clock restarts in the event that additional lightning is seen or thunder is heard.

Resources:

1. The National Weather Service website:
<https://www.weather.gov/safety/lightning-safety-overview> (2018)
2. NATA Position Statement on lightning safety:
https://www.nata.org/sites/default/files/2013_lightning-position-statement.pdf (2013)