

LIGHTNING AND INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

WEATHER

Recognition:

Coaches, athletic trainers, athletes, administrators and contest officials should be educated regarding the signs indicating thunderstorm development. Since the average distance between successive lightening flashes is approximately two to three miles **ANYTIME** that lightning can be seen or heard, the risk is already present. Weather can be monitored using the following methods:

- **Monitor Weather Patterns** – Be aware of potential thunderstorms by monitoring local weather forecasts the day before and morning of the competition, and by scanning the sky for signs of potential thunderstorm activity.
- **National Weather Service** – Weather can also be monitored using small, portable weather radios from the NWS. The NWS uses a system of severe storm watches and warnings watch indicates conditions are favorable for severe weather to develop in an area; a warning indicates severe weather has been reported in an area, and everyone should take proper precautions. **Any thunderstorm poses a risk of injury or death even if it does not meet the criteria for severe weather.** Therefore, anytime thunderstorms are in the forecast (even if it is only a 20 percent chance), event organizers should be at a heightened level of awareness to the potential danger of lightning.

Management:

- **Evacuation** – If lightening is imminent or a thunderstorm is approaching, all personnel, athletes and spectators shall evacuate to available safe structures or shelters.
- **Thirty-minute rule** – Competition or practice shall be suspended once lightning has **been recognized or thunder is heard**. It is required to wait **at least 30 minutes** after the last flash of lightning is witnessed or thunder is heard prior to resuming practice or competition. Given the average rates of thunderstorm travel, the storm should move 10-12 miles away from the area. This significantly reduces the risk of local lightning flashes. **Any subsequent lightning or thunder after the beginning of the 30 minute count shall reset the clock, and another count shall begin.** If after two 30 minute waiting periods have been concluded and a third 30 minute period needs to be initiated, all competition or practice shall be cancelled for the day. This is the three strikes and out rule.