

## **POLICY- SPORTS MEDICINE - SEVERE WEATHER/ LIGHTNING POLICY FOR ACTIONS BY OFFICIALS AT OUTDOOR EVENTS**

### **Sec. 1) LIGHTNING POLICY BACKGROUND INCLUDING PRACTICE**

- a) Preparedness is the key to execution of any policy designed to help safeguard all individuals at a scrimmage, contest or practice.
- b) The following is a suggested list of steps that should be taken in advance of any practice or contest.
- c) These represent optimal standards and where they cannot be logistically implemented, best practice alternatives shall be developed as part of the Emergency Action Plan (EAP) for after school activities.
  - (1) Assign staff to monitor local weather conditions before and during practices and contests.
  - (2) Develop an evacuation plan, including identification of appropriate nearby safer areas and determine the amount of time needed to get everyone to a designated safer area:
    - a. A designated safer place is a substantial building with plumbing and wiring where people live or work, such as a school, gymnasium or library.
    - b. An alternate safer place from the threat of lightning is a fully enclosed (not convertible or soft top) metal car or school bus.
    - c. For scrimmages and contests, this information should be relayed to the game officials and representatives of all competing teams.
  - (3) Develop criteria for suspension and resumption of practice which should mirror the policy directives in Sec. 2 for scrimmages and contests.
    - a. When thunder is heard or lightning is seen, the leading edge of the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning.
    - b. If such sight or sound is observed, suspend play for at least 30 minutes and vacate the outdoor activity to the previously designated safer location immediately.
    - c. Once play has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or lightning is witnessed prior to resuming play.
    - d. Any subsequent thunder or lightning after the beginning of the 30-minute count will reset the clock and another 30-minute count should begin.
    - e. When lightning-detection devices or mobile phone apps are available, this technology could be used to assist in making a decision to suspend play if a lightning strike is noted to be within 10 miles of the event location and sight or sound has not been detected.
    - f. Event managers should never depend on the reliability of these devices and, thus, hearing thunder or seeing lightning should always take precedence over information from a mobile app or lightning-detection device.
    - g. Event managers shall determine, through all available data, the optimum time to begin returning individuals to the competition areas for warming up, etc., but in no case may play (competition) resume until the 30-minutes count has elapsed.
  - (4) Review the lightning safety policy annually with all administrators, coaches and game personnel and train all personnel.
  - (5) Inform student-athletes and their parents of the lightning policy at start of the season

### **Sec. 2) LIGHTNING POLICY IMPLEMENTATION**

- a) Contest officials are encouraged to learn the weather forecast prior to contest time and to work cooperatively with home contest administration prior to making weather-related decisions.
- b) The Referee (Lead Official/Crew Chief) has authority once jurisdiction has begun as to suspensions and play resumption.
- c) The Referee (Lead Official/Crew Chief) shall stop play in a contest or scrimmage at the first sound of thunder or sight of lightning at the site and ensure adherence to this policy.
- d) When thunder is heard or lightning is seen, the leading edge of the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with

lightning.

- e) If such sight or sound is observed, suspend play for at least 30 minutes and vacate the outdoor activity to the previously designated safer location immediately.
- f) Once play has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or lightning is witnessed prior to resuming play.
- g) Any subsequent thunder or lightning after the beginning of the 30-minute count will reset the clock and another 30-minute count should begin.
- h) When lightning-detection devices or mobile phone apps are available, this technology could be used to assist in making a decision to suspend play if a lightning strike is noted to be within 10 miles of the event location but only if sight or sound has not been detected and such has been reported by game management to the Referee (Lead Official/Crew Chief).
- i) Contest officials and event managers should never depend on the reliability of new technology and, thus, hearing thunder or seeing lightning shall always take precedence over information from a mobile app or lightning-detection device.
- j) Event managers shall determine, through all available data, the optimum time to begin returning individuals to the competition areas for warming up, etc., but in no case may play (competition) resume until the 30-minutes count has elapsed.
- k) If severe weather appears to be of great length or intensity, the Referee (Lead Official/Crew Chief) shall work collaboratively with home contest administration and participating teams on decisions related to the resumption of play.
- l) All involved in suspension/resumption decisions should be familiar with any sport-specific rules that might be contained in the KHSAA Competition Rules.
- m) Final authority for the decision to resume rests within home contest administration in collaboration with the game officials.
- n) Safety of the public and participants is the most important factor in any decision of this type.