



Draper City Parks & Recreation

Weather/Lightning Safety Plan for Outdoor Recreation Activities

Lightning is one of the leading weather-related causes of death and injury in the United States. The purpose of this plan is to provide a safe environment for participants, spectators, parents, coaches, officials, and staff. No lightning safety plan will provide 100% guaranteed total safety, but the following guidelines will greatly minimize the lightning hazard to people. These guidelines are to be used to help those responsible for making decisions concerning the cancellation, suspension, or restarting of games or activities:

1. Recreation staff has complete authority to enforce these guidelines. Staff must immediately notify the Recreation Coordinator or Manager and provide them with specifics of the condition(s). In the absence of recreation staff, volunteer coaches must follow these guidelines.
2. When lightning is first seen or thunder is heard - all in attendance at the outdoor activity should immediately go to their cars or enter an enclosed building. For general information on lightning and thunder, see page 2.
 - 2.1. **Lightning Distance** – When you see lightning that it **connects from the cloud to the ground**, and your visibility is good and nothing is obstructing your view, count the seconds until you hear thunder. If that time is 30 seconds or less, the thunderstorm is within 6 miles and is dangerous. The threat of lightning continues for much longer than most people realize!
 - 2.2. **Thirty-Minute Rule** – Once play/practice has been suspended, that game is delayed for 20 minutes after the latest strike. If the delays continue it may be determined that a reschedule is necessary. The site supervisor will wait at least 20 minutes following the last flash of lightning prior to resuming play. If no lightning is seen, the site supervisor will make the decision to resume play for the following hour's activities.
 - 2.2.1. **All Draper City Activities and Events** – Once the decision has been made to clear the area and seek shelter, the current activity, as well as those who fall within the **Thirty-minute Rule**, will be canceled. Those activities scheduled after the **Thirty-Minute Rule** will be played as scheduled, if the environment and field conditions are deemed safe by Draper Recreation Staff.
3. **Common sense is the best rule when dealing with lightning. The decision should err on the side of being safe & conservative – lightning should be taken seriously.**
4. Any time a coach wants to pull his/her team from the field or a parent his/her child from the field, due to inclement weather, we will not prevent them from doing so and there will be no penalty taken against that team, coach, or parent. Activities may resume or be rescheduled based on the above **Thirty-Minute Rule**.
5. Refusal by coaches or participants to abide by these guidelines will result in disciplinary action by Draper City Recreation.
6. At any time, if the facility and/or field conditions or weather conditions are considered unsafe, the Recreation Staff reserves the final right to cancel or postpone any game or activity.

High Winds

When a high wind warning is issued by the National Weather Service (NWS), outdoor activities shall not operate within close proximity of trees, power lines, and other potential hazards. The NWS defines a high wind warning as sustained wind speeds of 40 mph or greater lasting for 1 hour or longer or 58 mph or greater for any duration of time. **Draper Recreation Staff may, at any time, deem conditions unsafe and cancel or postpone any game or activity.**

Weather Delays

If inclement weather occurs before the start of play, then stops before the scheduled game time, play will continue if field conditions are believed safe. If inclement weather continues into the scheduled playtime, Recreation Staff will invoke a 10-minute weather delay. After the 10-minute weather delay expires, staff will then decide if the weather and fields are suitable for play or if games should be declared canceled.

Disclaimer

This plan is intended to reduce the risk of injury or death from weather related events. However, due to unpredictability of weather, there is no guarantee to prevent injury or death.

General Information on Lightning and Thunder

- ❖ **Lightning behavior** is random and unpredictable. Preparedness and quick response are the best defenses towards the lightning hazard.
- ❖ **When should activities be stopped?** The sooner activities are stopped and people get to a safe place, the greater the level of safety. In general, a significant lightning threat extends outward from the base of a thunderstorm cloud about 6 to 10 miles. Therefore, people should move to a safe place when a thunderstorm is 6 to 10 miles away. In addition, you should account for the time it will take to get to safety.
- ❖ **If you see lightning.** The ability to see lightning varies depending on the time of day, weather conditions, and obstructions such as trees, mountains, etc. In clear air, and especially at night, lightning can be seen from storms more than 10 miles away provided that obstructions do not limit the view of the thunderstorm.
 - If you cannot see the lightning, hearing the thunder means lightning is likely within striking range.
 - Lightning does not “decide” where it will strike until it is descending from the cloud and is about 30 miles from the ground or object that is going to be struck. Therefore, short objects in an open area can be struck by lightning even if a tall object is nearby.
 - If you cannot find shelter, the following are things to stay away from: playgrounds, trees, lights and metal poles, open areas, bodies of water, metal fences, dugouts, open pavilions, sports equipment, bikes, etc. Seek enclosed indoor shelter or a fully enclosed metal-topped automobile.

- If you feel your skin tingle or your hair stand on end, squat low to the ground on the balls of your feet. Place your hands over your ears and your head between your knees. Make yourself the smallest target possible and minimize your contact with the ground. **DO NOT** lie down.
- ❖ **If you hear thunder.** Thunder can usually be heard for a distance of about 10 miles provided that there is no background noise. (Traffic, wind, and precipitation may limit the ability to hear thunder less than 10 miles). If you hear thunder, it is a safe bet that the storm is within ten miles.
- ❖ **Vehicle Safety.** If lightning is occurring and enclosed shelter is not available, get inside a fully enclosed automobile (fully enclosed metal-topped) and keep the windows up. Avoid touching any metal or turning on electrical devices. The metal frame acts as a conductor of electricity, and if hit, will channel the lightning strike away from your body.
- ❖ Avoid using **cell phones**. Use phones **ONLY** in an emergency.