

College Station Little League Lightning and Hazardous Weather Policy

In accordance with **Appendix A - Lightning Safety Guidelines** of the Little League rule book, local leagues shall have a lightning safety plan and designate someone to monitor the weather for lightning that is not a coach, umpire, or referee. The monitor should know the plan's guidelines and be empowered to assure that those guidelines are followed.

Lightning or hazardous weather is deemed imminent if any of the following exists:

1. Thunder is heard.
2. A lightning strike within 10 miles is observed. Observation can include:
 - a. Witnessing the strike visibly hit an area that is known to be within 10 miles.
 - b. Utilizing an application such as Weather Bug or other that detects a strike within 10 miles.
3. Devices installed by the city sounds a warning sign that conditions are right for lightning or that lightning has been detected. (One alert and/or a blinking light).
4. A tornado warning or watch is issued for an area that includes the field.
5. A thunderstorm warning is issued for an area that includes the field.
6. The sky looks threatening. According to **Appendix A - Lightning Safety Guidelines** of the Little League rule book, "In addition to any of the above criteria, activities should be halted if the sky looks threatening. Thunderstorms can develop directly overhead and some storms may develop lightning just as they move into an area."

Recommended Resources by City of College Station Parks and Recreation Department

- Information from sources containing local radar/satellite information such as Weatherbug, Accuweather, Intellicast, and KBTX
- KBTX weather reports
- Observation by all persons involved in the activity
- NOAA

What to do if Lightning or hazardous weather is deemed imminent

If lightning or hazardous weather becomes imminent all participants and other attendees present shall seek a lightning-safe structure.

According to the National Weather Service, a **lightning-safe structure** is either a substantial building (one with plumbing and wiring such as a home, school, church, office building, indoor concourse or recreation center) or an enclosed metal vehicle. At this time, no structures at Bachmann, Wayne Smith, or Bee Creek parks have been determined to be lightning-safe. Therefore, participants and attendees shall evacuate the field and find shelter in an enclosed metal vehicle.

Prior to the Event:

The board member on duty at Bachmann Park, in conjunction with the board member on duty at Wayne Smith and the president of the league or another designated board member will act as the lightning and hazardous weather monitors and will monitor weather related threats for the day and make every attempt to cancel any scheduled event before anyone shows up at the fields if lightning or hazardous weather is imminent. The goal here is not to overreact but to know that the majority of our members would rather know early and not be forced to come to the park and then the event

be cancelled. If lightning or hazardous weather becomes imminent within 30 or fewer minutes of start time, the event will be cancelled and may be rescheduled. No event will start under a delay due to lightning or hazardous weather being imminent.

Therefore, any event, for one example, scheduled to begin at 5:50 p.m. will be cancelled if lightning or hazardous weather becomes imminent anytime at or after 5:20 p.m. up until the end of the game. This will not necessarily cancel the second event of the evening. However, any event scheduled to start at 7:30 p.m. will be cancelled if lightning or hazardous weather becomes imminent anytime at or after 7:00 p.m. up until the end of the game.

During the Event:

During the event, the board member on duty will act as the lightning and hazardous weather monitor. If lightning or hazardous weather during an event is a possibility but not imminent, the board member on duty at each park will inform umpires and coaches of the possibility and what actions will be taken if it becomes imminent. It is important that time is taken here to reduce the amount of time that will be necessary in the event that lightning or hazardous weather becomes imminent.

If lightning or hazardous weather becomes imminent during a game or other scheduled event, the event shall be cancelled and all participants and other attendees shall seek a lightning-safe structure. The board member on duty shall inform the umpires and/or coaches on each field, the coaches on the tee ball fields, and the concession stand staff of the decision and communicate with them that they are required to seek a lightning-safe structure and that the game is cancelled.

Once the decision is made to cancel an event, the board member on duty does not have time to debate this decision with any umpire or coach due to the number of fields to which the board member must pass along this information.

If on duty at Bachmann, the board member shall inform the umpires and/or coaches on fields 1-4, then the concession staff, then the coaches at the tee ball fields, then the umpires and/or coaches at fields 5 and 6, making sure that each knows the policy.

Rescheduling of events that are cancelled will be handled with a different operating policy.

What should be done if someone is struck by lightning

According to **Appendix A - Lightning Safety Guidelines** of the Little League rule book, "Most lightning strike victims can survive a lightning strike; however, medical attention may be needed immediately - have someone call for medical help. Victims do not carry an electrical charge and should be attended to at once. In many cases, the victim's heart and/or breathing may have stopped and CPR may be needed to revive them. The victim should continue to be monitored until medical help arrives; heart and/or respiratory problems could persist, or the victim could go into shock. If possible, move the victim to a safer place away from the threat of another lightning strike."

Approved by College Station Little League Board of Directors for 2018

Notes from the National Weather Service

- ***There is no safe place outside when thunderstorms are in the area.*** If you hear thunder you are likely within striking distance of the storm. Just remember, “**When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors!**”
- A **lightning-safe structure** is either a substantial building (one with plumbing and wiring such as a home, school, church, office building, indoor concourse or recreation center) or an enclosed metal vehicle. Once inside, stay away from showers, sinks, bath tubs, and electric equipment such as stoves, radios, corded telephones and computers.
- **Unsafe buildings** include car ports, open garages, covered patios, picnic shelters, beach pavilions, and golf shelters, tents of any kind, baseball dugouts, sheds, and partially enclosed vending areas.
- A **safe vehicle** is any fully enclosed metal-topped vehicle such as a hard-topped car, minivan, bus, truck, etc. While inside a vehicle, do not open any windows and do not use electronic devices such as radio communications or touch metal framework during a thunderstorm.
- **Unsafe vehicles** include golf carts, convertibles, motorcycles, or any other open cab vehicle
- **Severe Thunderstorm Warnings are *not* issued based on lightning.** All thunderstorms produce thunder and lightning and are potentially deadly. A **Severe Thunderstorm Watch** or a **Tornado Watch** are issued when conditions are favorable for the development of severe storms (wind gusts in excess of 58 MPH, quarter size hail or larger, or tornadoes). A **Severe Thunderstorm or Tornado Warning** is issued when severe weather has been detected or may be imminent.
- Most victims survive a lightning strike; however medical attention is needed immediately. Have someone call 911. Victims do not carry an electrical charge and can be touched. In many cases, the victim’s heart and/or breathing may stop and rescue breathing and/or CPR may be needed. Monitor the victim until medical help arrives; heart and/or respiratory problems could persist, or the victim could go into shock. If possible, move the victim to a safer place away from the threat of another lightning strike.
- Lightning can strike outside of the rain area or thunderstorm cloud. In extreme cases, “bolts from the blue” can strike 10-15 miles from the thunderstorm. Don’t wait for rain to get to a safe structure and don’t leave the safe structure just because the rain has let up.
- Many lightning casualties occur because people do not seek a safe structure soon enough. Not wanting to appear overly cautious, many people wait far too long before reacting to this potentially deadly weather threat.
- Don’t hesitate to stop the event and have patrons seek a lightning-safe structure if the sky appears threatening (especially if your weather watcher knows thunderstorms are a possibility). Thunderstorms can develop directly overhead and some storms may develop lightning just as they move into your area.
- Only about 10% of people who are struck by lightning are killed, leaving 90% with various degrees of disability, including life-long debilitating injuries.

