

SCFL Emergency Action Plan: Weather Related Issues

When a Memorial Hermann Athletic Trainer is on campus at Gullo Park, lightning will be monitored by Weatherbug/Spark Alert and/or WxSentry mobile apps. Guidelines established form the base plan that once lightning activity is detected within 8 miles distance of fields or once there is less than 40 seconds between the sight of lightning and the sound of thunder, all individuals should be cleared from the field and directed to a safe location.

Evacuation Criteria: (8 miles or 40 seconds Lightning Rule)

WeatherBug/Spark Alert and/or WxSentry mobile apps detect lightning activity within an 8 mile distance of the fields. Alternatively, if thunderstorms develop, count the seconds between the flash of lightning and the bang of the thunder to estimate the distance between you and the lightning strike. Because sound travels at approximately 1 mile in 5 seconds, you can determine how far away the lightning is by using the “flash-to-bang” method. To use the “flash-to-bang” method, count the seconds from the time lightning is sighted to when the clap of thunder is heard. Divide this number by five (5) to obtain how far away (in miles) the lightning is occurring. (Ex. 40 sec. count / 5 = 8 miles distance). It is recommended that you seek shelter if the time between the lightning flash and the rumble of thunder is 40 seconds or less (8 miles). Once inside shelter, you should not resume outdoor activities until 30 minutes after the last audible thunder. This is known as the 40/30 Lightning Rule.

Activity Stoppage: (if fields are cleared – minimum 30 weather delay)

The decision regarding stoppage of a game will be made by 1) the on-site MH Athletic Trainer, or 2) the on-site Board Member(s), or 3) the on-site head game official/referee. Any one of these has the authority to stop the activity, should conditions warrant. This authority is unchallengeable. In cases where the decision to remove their respective team from the playing field is questioned by an athlete, spectator, or opposing coach, the on-site MH Athletic Trainer, Board Member, or head game official/referee’s decision will be fully supported by South County Football League. The decision regarding the stoppage of a practice must be made by the coaching staff. All coaches, officials, board members, and parents need to abide by this policy to ensure the safety of all athletes, coaches, game managers, spectators, and all others who may be present. It is important to note that blue skies and no rain are not protection from a lightning strike which can occur from a distance as far away as 10 miles from an existing storm.

Safe areas for shelter include: (safest place at SCFL is in your car)

- a) Enclosed buildings or any building normally occupied or frequently used by people, i.e. a building with plumbing and/or electrical wiring that acts to electrically ground the structure. Avoid using plumbing facilities and avoid contact with electrical machines and appliances during a thunderstorm.
- b) Fully enclosed metal vehicles with a hard metal roof and windows rolled up. Any vehicle with a hard metal roof (neither a convertible, nor a golf cart / gator) with the windows shut provides a measure of safety. The hard metal frame and roof, not the rubber tires, are what protects occupants by dissipating lightning current around the vehicle and not through the occupants. It is important not to touch the metal framework of the vehicle.
- c) Low ground areas can serve as a last resort such as a ditch or a bottom of hill. Assume a crouched position to minimize your body area. Do not lie flat and do not crouch in standing water.
- d) Press box buildings.

Unsafe areas include: (all of the areas listed below are present at Gullo Park – SCFL)

- a) Open fields
- b) Convertible cars or golf carts / gator
- c) Metal bleachers (on or under)
- d) Fences
- e) Umbrellas, flag poles, light poles
- f) Tall trees

Resuming activity: (you will be given ample notice prior to resuming game)

There should be 30 minutes between the last sound of thunder and the last flash of lightning before activity is resumed. The 30 minute clock may be re-set as more activity is heard or seen. Board members will update coaches on when the game will resume. Parents should monitor SCFL's website for updates as well as continue to check email and watch for updates sent via SCFL's "rainout" information system. You can find the "rainout" information system on SCFL's webpage in the upper right hand corner. You must be a subscriber to get updates. We encourage all families to sign up as soon as possible.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated!

SCFL Board