



## **ANOKA RAMSEY ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION LIGHTNING SAFETY POLICY**

Lightning is a dangerous phenomenon. Athletic teams that practice and compete outdoors are at risk when the weather is inclement. The Anoka/Ramsey Athletic Association has developed the following lightning safety policy, which must be followed, to minimize the risk of injury from a lightning strike to its athletes, coaches, support staff and fans. This policy will be strictly enforced as the safety of the player is paramount.

### **I. Chain of Command**

- Be aware of national Weather Service-issued watches and warnings, as well as the signs of thunderstorms developing nearby. A watch means conditions are favorable for severe weather to develop in an area; a warning means that severe weather has been reported in an area and for everyone to take proper precautions. Know where the closest safe structure or location is to the field or playing area, and know how long it takes to get to that safe structure or location.
- The responsibility for removing athletes from a practice, scrimmage or game area due to the threat of lightning lies with the head coach, assistant coach or the official of that particular sport.

It is the responsibility of the head coach to inform the official, referee or umpire in charge and the visiting team's head coach of the lightning policy.

### **II. Means of Monitoring Weather**

- FLASH/BANG Lightning Detection Method:
  1. Watch for the flash of lightning.
  2. Begin to count (one one thousand, two one thousand . . . .)
  3. Stop counting when you hear the bang of thunder.
  4. Take this number and divide by 5. This will give you an approximation of how far away the lightning is (5 seconds = 1 mile). EXAMPLE: You see a flash of lightning and you begin to count. You reach 45 before you hear the bang of thunder.  $45 \div 5 = 9$ . The lightning would be approximately 9 miles away.
  5. If the "Flash/Bang" interval is decreasing rapidly, and the storm is approaching your location, or if the "Flash/Bang" count approaches thirty (30) seconds, all outdoor athletic activities must cease. All persons must immediately leave the athletic site and seek shelter.

### **III. Suspension, Resumption, and Termination of Athletic Activity**

- Suspension of athletic activity should occur when lightning is within six miles or the Flash/Bang ratio reaches thirty (30) seconds.
- Resumption of athletic activity shall not occur until thirty (30) minutes after the last lightning flash is seen. If, while waiting due to inclement weather, another lightning strike is seen, the thirty (30) minute mandatory waiting period must start again.
- In the event a game is terminated due to weather, the rules of the particular sport shall determine whether the contest is “official” or must be resumed at a later date.

With the information and background on lightning presented in this policy, the coach can make an intelligent and safe decision regarding the removal of a team or individuals from an athletic site or the stopping of play during dangerous thunderstorm activity. In addition, any individuals who feel they are in danger of any lightning activity have the right to leave a field or event site to seek safe shelter.

The onus of removing a team or individual from an athletic site in the event of dangerous and imminent lightning activity is on the coach supervising the activity. The safety of any team or student-athlete ultimately rests with that coach. ***Coaches who do not comply with the above are subject to immediate disciplinary action by the Anoka/Ramsey Board of Directors.***

**REMEMBER, IT IS ONLY A GAME!**

COMPLIANCE STATEMENT FOR ALL ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL