

Vestavia Hills Parks & Recreation Lightning/ Severe Weather Policy for Outdoor Activities

The purpose of this guideline is to provide a default policy to those responsible for making decisions concerning the suspension and restarting of a contest or practice based on the following:

CRITERIA FOR SUSPENSION AND RESUMPTION OF PLAY REGARDING

THUNDER AND LIGHTNING:

- When lightning detector detects lightning is within 20 minutes of the area, the fields will be closed. A horn with 3 long blasts will be sounded and the fields must be cleared. (An appropriate shelter is an enclosed area, i.e. a restroom, meeting room, storm shelter, or a car. Neither a dugout nor an overhead awning is an appropriate shelter.)
- When the lightning detector says lightning is more than 20 minutes away an “All-Clear” signal will be given and play or practice may resume. Parks and Recreation employees will have the final say on “All-Clear”.
- When a lightning detection device is not available, a 30 second or less flash-to-bang count calls for removal of the athletes/spectators from the field to an appropriate shelter.
- Thirty-minute rule. Once play/practice has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes following the last flash of lightning or sound of thunder prior to resuming play.

REFUSAL TO ABIDE BY THE LIGHTNING POLICY WILL RESULT IN DISCIPLINARY ACTION BY THE VESTAVIA HILLS PARKS & RECREATION PARK BOARD.

1. For the 1st offense, coaches will forfeit the opportunity for their team to practice for one entire week.
2. For the 2nd offense, coaches will be suspended for the remainder of the year.
3. Game officials will be under a “zero tolerance” policy. He/she will not be allowed to officiate a game for the remainder of the year.
4. Sport board member(s) negligent in this area will be disciplined by the related sport board as they see fit.

Common sense is the best rule of thumb when dealing with lightning. The default decision should err on the side of being conservative – lightning is not something that should be taken lightly. “If you can see it (lightning), flee it (take shelter). If you can hear it (thunder), clear it (suspend activities).”

Shelters at Liberty Park – The maintenance personnel at Liberty Park will have access to the storm shelters. The maintenance personnel will ensure that these are open when severe weather is a possibility.