

Eanes Independent School District

Athletic Department

Lightning Safety Policy

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- I. Objective:** To institute and implement guidelines and safety recommendations to insure safety for all who participate, supervise and attend E.I.S.D. athletic contests.
- II. Postponement, Suspend, Cancel or Proceed:**
- A. These responsibilities are delegated to:
1. School administrator or athletic director
 2. Athletic trainer
 3. Head coach of respective sport
 4. Game official
- III. Weather Monitoring:**
- A. Anyone using any of the Eanes ISD Facilities must comply with district lightning policy.
- B. All Eanes ISD Facilities have THOR GUARD Lightning Prediction Systems that can alert all exterior playfields and playgrounds.
- C. THOR GUARD Lightning Prediction Systems scientifically predicts the probability of a lightning strike, including the very first strike (unlike “detection” or “tracking” systems which provide a notice based upon actual occurrence of a lightning strike after the fact.) It provides the ultimate in integrated lightning warning systems for outdoor areas such as our school grounds, play fields, tennis courts, and stadium.
- i. Locations are:
1. WHS Stadium (on visitor pressbox)
 2. Eanes Elementary (on roof of Library)
 3. Hill Country Middle School (on roof of 600 wing)
 4. Forest Trail (on roof of Child Nutrition Central Kitchen)
 5. Bridge Point (on maintenance road in back)
 6. Barton Creek Elementary (on roof)
- D. The system will provide 8 to 20 minutes advance warning within a 2 or more mile radius. It is important to note that lightning does not need to be visible before a warning is given.

- i. When activated the system will provide:
 - 1. A warning of a 15 second continuous horn blare (air horn) to alert everyone to seek protection.
 - 2. The strobe light on the device will come on and stay on until “all clear”.
- ii. THOR Guard warns people, before a strike will hit, to go and seek protection!

IV. Resumption of Activity:

- A. Three (3) consistent five (5) second horn blares will indicate an “all clear”, then it is safe to go back out.
- B. As long as there is lightning in the area, the strobe light will continue flashing.

VII. E.I.S.D. Designated Safe Shelter Areas:

- A. Individuals in dangerous lightning situations should never wait to seek a safe location, it is important to be proactive by going into a safe structure or location long before the lightning is close to be threatening.
- B. The designated safe shelter areas for the outdoor U.I.L. activities are as follows:
 - a. WHS Stadium
 - 1. Restroom facilities
 - 2. Concession stands
 - 3. Chap Store
 - 4. School building
 - 5. Fully enclosed vehicles with a metal roof and windows completely enclosed, personal vehicles or buses.
 - 6. Chap Court in WHS Building
 - b. Baseball Stadium
 - 1. Restroom facilities
 - 2. Concession stands
 - 3. School building
 - 4. Fully enclosed vehicle with a metal roof and windows completely enclosed, personal vehicles or buses.
 - 5. Chap Court in WHS Building.
 - c. Softball Stadium
 - 1. Restroom facilities
 - 2. Concession stands
 - 3. School building
 - 4. Fully enclosed vehicle with a metal roof and windows completely enclosed, personal vehicles or buses.
 - d. Other Playfields
 - 1. School building
 - 2. Fully enclosed vehicles with a metal roof and windows completely enclosed, personal vehicles or buses.
 - 3. Buildings with four solid walls, with a roof and plumbing.

VIII. Designated Unsafe Areas:

1. Unsafe in baseball/softball dugouts
2. Unsafe in batting cages
3. Unsafe in press boxes
3. Unsafe under/around trees
4. Unsafe in bleachers: do not sit in the stands
5. Unsafe under the bleachers - do not seek shelter under the stands
6. Unsafe in high places and open fields
7. Unsafe in picnic shelters/shade structures
8. Unsafe around flagpoles
9. Unsafe near or on metal fences or any metal structures
10. Unsafe in outdoor pools: evacuate to dressing rooms or automobiles

IX. Lightning Safe Position:

- A. Individuals who feel their hair stand on end, skin tingle or hear crackling noises should assume the “lightning safe position”.
- B. Lightning Safe Position –
 - Crouch on the ground
 - Weight on the balls of the feet
 - Feet together
 - Head lowered
 - Ears covered
 - Do not lie flat on the ground!
- C. This position is intended to minimize the probability of a direct strike by both lowering the person’s height and minimizing the area in contact with the surface of the ground.

X. Public Address Announcer:

- A. Safety announcements shall be repeated over the public address system, announcing the evacuation procedures for all participants, patrons and E.I.S.D personnel. This shall be the responsibility of the administrator on duty to direct the public address announcer to announce the impending severe weather and evacuation procedures.
- B. The public address announcer will emphasize that patrons are not to remain in the stands or under them.
- C. During announced events at the WHS Stadium or other outside events, the announcer must make the following lightning announcement:

“May I have your attention, please. A lightning storm is approaching our area. For your safety, please start moving calmly out of the stands toward shelter. Please go to your car and do not remain under the stands. Student athletes and other student event participants will be moved into the building at this time for their safety. The _____ (event) is now being halted at this time until the THOR GUARD Lightning Prediction System sounds the all clear. When we resume the _____ (event), an announcement will be made over the public address system and you will be permitted to re-enter. Thank you.”

XI. What to do if someone is struck by lightning

- A. Lightning victims do not carry an electrical charge, are safe to handle and need immediate medical attention.
- B. Call for help. Have someone call 9-1-1 immediately. Medical attention is needed as quickly as possible.
- C. Thunderstorm, lightning activity in the local area still poses a deadly hazard for the medical team responding to the incident. The athletic trainer or other medical personnel should consider his or her own personal safety before venturing into a dangerous situation to render care.
- D. Give first aid. Cardiac arrest is an immediate cause of death in lightning fatalities. However, some deaths can be prevented if a victim receives the proper first aid immediately. Check the victim to see that they are breathing and have a pulse and continue to monitor the victim until help arrives. Begin CPR if necessary.
- E. If possible, move the victim to a safer place. An active thunderstorm is still dangerous. Do not let the rescuers become victims. Lightning CAN strike the same place twice.

XII. Yearly Safety Procedure Meeting

- A. The athletic trainers will have a meeting at the beginning of each school year with school administrators who will be covering athletic events to discuss the E.I.S.D. Lightning Policy.
- B. Other important weather information for Eanes ISD school activities:

Listen to NOAA Weather Radio or go to a weather website on your computer, such as Weather Underground <http://www.wunderground.com/US/TX/Austin.html?bannertypeclick=miniStates> for the latest forecast and for any severe thunderstorm WATCHES or WARNINGS. Severe thunderstorms produce winds of 58 mph or greater, or hail $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch or larger in diameter.

 - a. A severe thunderstorm WATCH is issued when conditions are favorable for severe weather to develop.
 - b. A severe thunderstorm WARNING is issued when severe weather is imminent. National Weather Service personnel use information from weather radar, satellite, lightning detection, spotters and other sources to issue these warnings.

XIII. Conclusions

- A. Lightning is the most consistent and significant weather hazard that can affect interscholastic athletics. National Lightning Safety Institute, almost 1/3 of all lightning strikes occurred in an open field area, such as a baseball, softball and football fields or on golf courses.
- B. Each person must take responsibility for his or her own personal safety during thunderstorms. However, because people are often under the direction of others, whether they are children or adults participating in organized athletics, athletic trainers, coaches, teachers and game officials must receive education about the hazards of lightning and become familiar with proved lightning safety strategies.
- C. Lightning can strike in the absence of rain, as well as from apparently clear blue skies overhead, even though a thunderstorm may be nearby. The presence of lightning or thunder should be the determining factor in postponing or suspending games and activities, not the amount of rainfall on the playing field.
- D. Being aware of and following proven lightning safety guidelines can greatly reduce the risk of injury or death.
- E. A policy is only as good as its compliance and unwavering, broad base enforcement.

XIII. Acknowledgments

National Athletic Trainers' Association Position Statement: Lightning Safety for Athletics and Recreation, Katie M. Walsh, EdD, ATC-L; Brian Bennett, Med, ATC; Mary Ann Cooper, MD; Ronald L. Holle, MS; Richard Kithil, MBA; Raul E. Lopez, PhD.
www.journalofathletictraining.org.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA): A Safety Guide – Coaches and Sports Official's Guide to Lightning Safety. March 2003, revised.
<http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov>.

Austin Energy, Gregory A. Davidson, C.H.S.T.

Round Rock ISD Athletic Department Lightning Policy

Dallas Public Schools Athletic Department Lightning Policy

Lake Worth ISD Lightning Safety Policy