

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

The purpose of this document is to provide a citywide policy to those responsible for making decisions concerning the suspension and restarting of an outdoor activity, contest or practice during periods of inclement weather on city property:

Criteria for suspension and resumption of play regarding thunder and lightning:

1. During periods of inclement weather or severe weather alerts involving thunder and lightning, any team or group of individuals occupying any field or property owned by the City of Vestavia Hills, must designate one person to monitor for lightning strikes via app or other reliable source for tracking lightning strikes;
2. When the designated person's lightning monitor detects lightning within 10 miles of the area where any outdoor activity, contest or practice is occurring on city property or fields, the fields must be closed and the property cleared. All persons occupying the property or field must immediately move to appropriate shelter in an enclosed area such as a restroom, meeting room, storm shelter or vehicle. Neither a dugout nor an overhead awning is appropriate shelter.
3. If city employees detect lightning within 10 miles of an area where outdoor activity, contest or practice is occurring on city property or fields, a horn with 3 long blasts will be sounded and the fields must be closed and the property cleared. All persons occupying the property or field must immediately move to appropriate shelter in an enclosed area such as a restroom, meeting room, storm shelter or vehicle. Neither a dugout nor an overhead awning is appropriate shelter.
4. The activity cannot resume until the expiration of 30 minutes after the last detected lightning strike within the 10 mile radius of the activity.
5. If Parks and Recreation employees are present on the property, they will have the final say on "All-Clear" and the resumption of the activity.
6. When a lightning detection device is not available, a 30 second or less flash-to-bang count calls for the fields to be closed and the property cleared. All persons occupying the property or field must immediately move to appropriate shelter in an enclosed area such as a restroom, meeting room, storm shelter or vehicle. Neither a dugout nor an overhead awning is appropriate shelter.
7. Thirty-minute rule. Once play/practice has been suspended using the 30 second flash-to-bang method, the activity cannot resume until the expiration of 30 minutes following the last 30 second or less flash to bang.

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.

Approved by Park Board on 9-17-19