

Grayslake Park District

Severe Weather and Lightning Procedure

Lightning is a violent act of nature and causes approximately 10 deaths per year in Illinois alone. In most instances, people injured by lightning are not directly hit. These non-direct hit injuries are caused by transients, currents that flow through people in the vicinity where lightning strikes the ground. Lightning strikes occur most frequently during the spring and summer months when thunderstorms are prevalent. It is the policy of the Grayslake Park District that all persons supervising outdoor activities be aware that when lightning or thunder is observed or heard, outdoor programs should be suspended and everyone should seek appropriate shelter. Supervisors should adhere to the following procedures and guidelines.

Outdoor Program:

- Instructors and Supervisors should listen to current weather forecasts the morning of any outdoor planned activities so that employees can be alert to changing weather conditions.
- Monitor weather conditions as they appear on the horizon.
- Monitor weather radios when possible.
- Designate buildings that can be used when severe weather occurs.
- Plan alternative indoor activities for camps and related programs.
- It is the coaches and umpires/referees responsibility to remove all players from athletic fields at the first sight of lightning or the first sound of thunder.
- All athletic teams must take cover in their vehicles and remove themselves from all dugouts and fields.
- **Whenever lightning is observed or thunder is audible, all outdoor activities should be suspended for a minimum of 30 minutes after the last sign of lightning or thunder is noted.**

When Outside:

- Avoid areas that are higher than the surrounding landscape.
- Do not use a tree for shelter.
- Keep away from metal objects, including bicycles, golf carts, umbrellas, etc.
- Avoid standing near tall or metal objects such as fences, light poles or power lines.
- Boaters and swimmers should immediately leave the water and find shelter.
- If you feel your skin tingle or your hair stand on end, squat low to the ground on the balls of your feet. Place your hands on your knees with your head between them. Make yourself as small a target as possible and minimize your contact with the ground.

Outdoor Programs at Alleghany Park:

For the safety of our patrons, the Grayslake Park District has installed **STRIKE GUARD Lightning Detection System**. The base unit is located at Alleghany Park Concession Building. This system predicts when conditions indicate the potential for a lightning strike.

If siren sounds (solid tone) and strobe light is on - take shelter- strobe light remains on during lightning detection.

When siren sounds three five-second intermittent blasts and the strobe light is off - It is safe to return.

This system is not absolute protection. Use common sense.

Seek shelter immediately if: you hear one long siren, you hear thunder (regardless of siren), you see lightning (regardless of siren), if you see the strobe light on when arriving at the park.

When the STRIKE GUARD sounds the warning siren and the strobe light is on:

- All activities must be immediately stopped.
- Park patrons should seek shelter in their cars (with the windows rolled up) or in a building. Patrons should avoid areas that are higher than the surrounding landscape; they should not use a tree for shelter, and should keep away from metal objects such as bicycles, golf clubs, fences, umbrellas, etc.
- Even if the weather does not appear to be threatening, everyone should seek shelter. People have been struck by a bolt out of the blue. A bolt out of the blue is one that strikes when the sky is clear.
- Remain in the shelter until the STRIKE GUARD sounds three five-second blasts of the siren and the strobe light turns off, signaling the all-clear.

Tornado Policy:

Go to a shelter as soon as warning is sounded. A vehicle is never a shelter area. Available First Aid Kits, flashlights and radios are to be taken to the shelter area if possible. Once in shelter location, teachers and/or program leaders should take a head count and supervisors should account for their staff.

If in a facility, everyone should sit on floor. At time of impact, put hands on back of head; bring elbows together and put head to knees. If you are outside in a low area or ditch, lie in the ditch face down and cover your head with your hands.

Do not leave the shelter area until an announcement or all clear signal is heard. If you are outside with no radio or phone, wait until sirens have stopped and then use your best judgment according to the present weather conditions.

When Indoors:

- When indoors, stand clear from doors and windows.
- Do not use electrical equipment, including hair dryers, curling irons, computers, etc.
- Do not attempt to unplug TVs, stereos or computers during a storm.
- Avoid contact with sinks, faucets and related piping.
- Do not use the telephone unless for emergency use.
- Indoor pool swimmers should immediately leave the water and seek shelter away from pool deck.

Winter Weather:

The Park District tries our best to stay open whenever there is a winter storm, however, there are times that the safety of our staff and patrons will force us to close facilities or cancel programs. The decision to close the facility or cancel programs will be made by the Executive Director or Superintendent of Recreation.

It is every employee's responsibility to ensure that sidewalks and entryways are properly salted and cleared of snow for everyone's safety. Therefore, if you are able and it is necessary, please spread salt or assist with clearing when needed. If you are not able to assist, please make the proper people aware of existing hazards.

The Executive Director or Superintendent of Recreation should approve all program cancellations and facility closings. If Grayslake School District #46 closes: all I Love Learning Preschool classes along with any programs held at District #46 schools will be automatically cancelled. The Superintendent of Recreation or Recreation Supervisors will announce all other recreation program cancellations.

Program staff and participants should be contacted by supervisors and/or available staff as soon as possible if canceling programs or closing facilities.