

NAIA INCLEMENT WEATHER GUIDELINE

The NAIA certified athletic trainers are committed to providing the best environment for safe competition. A means of providing this environment is the development of an Inclement Weather Guideline for outdoor events. By establishing such guidelines, each member institution ensures the safety of all stud-athletes, coaches, support staff medical staff, and spectators both at home and away events within the NAIA.

The process of an effective guideline or policy involves more than determining that thunder and lightning are dangerous. The document must also be clear and concise, including (but not limited to):

- a Chain of Command
- a detailed time of evacuation
- specific safe shelter areas for each sport
- delayed time for return to play

The NAIA recommends the following guides be used when developing a written Inclement Weather Guideline or Policy for the institution:

- I. Monitor weather conditions and be ready to activate the Chain of Command
- II. When thunder or lightning is observed, suspend activities with a Flash to Bang count of 30 seconds or less (when the storm is 6 miles away).

To use the Flash to Bang count, count the seconds from the time lightning is sighted to when the clap of thunder is heard. Divide this number by five to obtain how far away (in miles) the lightning is occurring (Ex: 20 second count = 4 mile distance, 25 second count = 5 mile distance, etc.)

- III. Leave the athletic fields and seek SAFE shelter areas - IMMEDIATELY
SAFE shelter areas:
 - enclosed buildings
 - fully enclosed metal vehicles with windows up
 - low ground areas (ex: bottom of a hill, clumps of bushes, etc.) as a last resortUNSAFE shelter areas:
 - open fields
 - golf carts/gators
 - metal bleachers (on or under them)
 - umbrellas, light poles, flag poles
 - tall trees
 - pools of standing waterAVOID the following activities:
 - showers
 - telephones (except cellular)
 - use of electrical outlets/machines (ex: hair dryers, computers, TV/VCR, fax)

If you feel your hair standing on end, and/or "crackling noises" - you are in lightning's electric field. IMMEDIATELY assume a crouched position: arms around knees, head tucked, and only the balls of your feet touching the ground.

- IV. Resume activity 30 minutes from the last sight of lightning and sound of thunder.
- V. Activate the Emergency Action Plan if someone is struck by lightning. A person struck by lightning Does NOT carry an electrical charge; immediately initiate the emergency action plan and begin the primary survey.