

# Hudson City School District



## Severe Weather and Extreme Temperature Policy and Procedure

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**The Board of Education Policy Statement**

The Hudson City School District is committed to protecting the safety and health of our students, employees, and visitors. The school district recognizes that severe weather and extreme temperatures can impair safety in the school's buildings and during outdoor activities sponsored by the school district. To this end, the Board of Education directs the Superintendent of Schools to create and implement procedures related to severe weather and extreme temperatures including, developing systems to gain information on severe weather, having appropriate responses in response to severe weather and having guidelines for temperatures extremes both in the school's facilities and during outside events.

## Severe Weather and Extreme Temperature Procedure

### The Severe Weather Coordinator

The school's Safety and Health Designee shall be designated the Severe Weather Coordinator. The Severe Weather Coordinator is responsible for the maintenance and overall implementation of the school district's severe weather plan. The coordinator shall interface with administrators, physical education, and athletic department staff to coordinate training, drilling, and review of severe weather incidents.

### Section 1 Overview

The school district will use a combination of the following methods to become aware of severe weather

- Weather Alert Application on school officials smartphones such as iAlert.com (provides free severe weather text message alerts) or Wireless Emergency Alerts [http://www.ctia.org/consumer\\_info/safety/index.cfm/AID/12082](http://www.ctia.org/consumer_info/safety/index.cfm/AID/12082)
- Columbia County Red Alert Text Messages
- Accuweather.com on school official's smartphone and/or computer
- NOAA Weather Radio
- NWS Albany web site: [weather.gov/Albany](http://weather.gov/Albany)

### Thunderstorms and Lightning

***The school employee supervising outdoor activities shall take the following steps as soon as thunder is heard:*** outdoor activities shall be stopped (*When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors!*). Outdoor activities will not be resumed until the storm has passed. It is important not to resume activities simply because the rain has stopped or you no longer hear thunder. Since lightning can strike far from the parent cloud, do not resume outdoor activities until 30 minutes after thunder is last heard. Additionally if a school district lightning detection meter is available that device should be used for final clearance before the resumption of outdoor activities.

**30-30 Rule** - Determine the threat of lightning in your area.

o **30 Seconds:** Count the seconds between seeing lightning and hearing thunder. If this time is less than 30 seconds, lightning is still a potential threat. Seek shelter immediately.

o **30 minutes:** After the last lightning flash, wait 30 minutes before leaving shelter. Half of all lightning deaths occur after the storm passes. Stay in a safe area until you are sure the threat has passed.

### Tornado Warning

When a tornado warning is issued for Columbia County and the Severe Weather Coordinator has determined that your school is in the path of this storm, an ***"immediate and complete call to action"*** is needed (see Tornado Warning example below). If the storm has not yet reached your school, the school should call a duck and cover drill and begin moving students and staff from unsafe areas.

Once the storm has passed and buildings and grounds determines that all areas of the building are safe, students may return to classrooms. Where necessary, buildings and grounds may call the school's code enforcement officer or a structural engineer for assistance. Stay alert for the potential for additional storms.

### **Extreme Cold Considerations for School Buildings and Outdoor Play (non-coaching activities)**

- The New York State Education Department (SED) Facilities Planning Department requires that 65°F be maintained in student-occupied educational settings. If this temperature cannot be maintained during winter months, Facilities Planning should be contacted for further guidance.
- During winter outside activities it is recommended that students and personnel be dressed adequately i.e. hats, gloves and boots.
- School personnel in charge of activities should consider rescheduling or relocating outside activities inside when the combined wind chill and temperature (WCT) are 20°F or below.
- It is strongly recommended that no activities should be held outside when the National Weather service issues a wind chill advisory. This occurs when the WCT is forecast to be between 10°F and minus 24°F.
- Wind Chill will be checked when the air temperature is 39 degrees (Fahrenheit) or lower.

### **Extreme Heat for School Buildings and Outdoor Play (non-coaching activities)**

- All personnel in charge of activities i.e. coaches, teachers and building administrators should be aware of extreme weather conditions. The CDC describes extreme heat when the temperature rises 10°F above the regional average and continues for three weeks. Risk for heat illness increases in times of extreme heat.
- During times of extreme heat when air conditioning units are not working or are not available, classes should be relocated to areas with air conditioning. If that is not possible, building administrators should actively monitor the Heat Index. If the HI reaches above 90 then the school physician or Columbia County Department of Health should be contacted to determine the risk involved in continuing class.
- During time of extreme heat, it is recommended large assemblies be rescheduled. If this causes conflict then building administrators should contact the school physician or Columbia County Department of Health to be advised if there is a risk in having an assembly.
- SED recommends several actions administrators can take during times of extreme heat:
  - Ensure that students have access to and adequate supply of water either by drinking fountains or bottled water
  - Check the ventilations systems to make sure that the air circulation is happening to aid in evaporative cooling.
  - Prevent sunlight from coming in by closing blinds
  - Turn off all un-necessary lighting and electronic devices.
  - If portable fans are in use be sure to not block doorways and exits, cords are not causing a trip hazard and that all guards are in place.

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- Heat index (RealFeel temperature) will be checked when the air temperature is 80 degrees (Fahrenheit) or higher.
- At RealFeel temperatures of 95F and greater, heat disorders such as cramps, heat exhaustion, and heatstroke are possible. Students should be kept out of the sun and strenuous activities should be eliminated. Encourage students to drink plenty of water and wear light-colored, lightweight clothing. School staff should familiarize themselves with the symptoms of heat disorders and first aid procedures.

## Section 2 Transportation

### Delay Departure of Students

You should consider holding the departure of students to buses whenever watches or warnings are in effect. There are two primary considerations:

- 1) Upon departure, determine the amount of time it will take students to get safely home. Include time for the students to walk from their bus stop to their home; and,
- 2) How much time do you have before the storms are expected to impact your district? Severe thunderstorm and tornado watches are often issued several hours in advance of thunderstorm development. Watches are generally issued for large areas, so it may be a couple of hours before the storms reach you. On the other hand, it may be a rapidly developing situation with less than an hour before the storms impact.

If there is a possibility that students will be traveling during the storm, delay their departure until after the storm has passed. Buses ***“do not provide protection”*** from severe storms, so you should provide adequate time for students to get home.

***It is not advisable for parents to go to the school to pick up their children in severe weather. Children are far safer at the school with the severe weather plan in place than on the road when a storm strikes.***

### F. School Bus Driver Actions

#### 1) **TORNADOES - NEVER ATTEMPT TO OUTFRAN A TORNADO!**

If a bus driver has reason to believe a tornado is approaching, the following steps should be taken:

1. If you have the time to get the students to a well-constructed building, then certainly do so as fast as possible. Move them into the interior or basement of the building away from windows and doors.
2. If no well-constructed building is available for shelter, then look for a ditch or low lying area (preferably without water). Stop the bus downwind from the location you have selected. You do not want the wind to roll the bus toward where the students will be. Unload the students and move them to the ditch or low-lying area and have them get in the protective position with their hands over the head.

#### 2) **FLOODING - NEVER ATTEMPT TO DRIVE THROUGH FLOOD WATERS!**

If your bus route takes you across small streams and creeks or along a river, you need to have either an alternate route to travel or a contingency plan to return to the school, should flood-waters be encountered. Major river flooding generally is well forecast with warnings issued early enough that school officials can plan their strategy prior to placing the students on the bus. ***Flash flooding***

(a sudden and dramatic rise in water levels leading to flood conditions) does not lend much warning time (by definition). **Drivers need to understand what to do and what not to do.**

A shallow ponding of water on the roadway is usually not a problem, but as soon as the depth of the water comes into question, particularly in cases where the road may have been undermined, drivers should not enter. Do not enter underpasses that are filling with water. If the water appears to be flowing (moving across the road), do not enter the water.

Water levels can rise rapidly, and the force of that water against an automobile, even a bus, can be amazingly powerful. If the driver is caught in an unavoidable situation, seek higher ground immediately. ***If the bus stalls, and water is rising, abandon the bus and seek higher ground before the situation worsens.***

### Section 3 Location Specific Guidance

- Country Club (Golf)
- Greenport Town Park (Cross Country)

## Section 4 Coaches

### Activities in Extreme Cold:

- It is strongly recommended that no activities should be held outside when the National Weather service issues a wind chill advisory. This occurs when the WCT is forecast to be between 10°F and minus 24°F.
- Wind Chill will be checked when the air temperature is 39 degrees (Fahrenheit) or lower.
- If the RealFeel temperature (wind chill) is 10 degrees or below, the athletic trainer, athletic director, or school designee must re-check the RealFeel (wind chill) at halftime or midway point of the contest. If the RealFeel (wind chill) temperature is -11 degrees (Fahrenheit) or lower, the contest will be suspended.

	RealFeel (wind chill) above 40 degrees	Full activity. No restrictions
R E C O M M E N D E D	Wind Chill Caution: RealFeel (wind chill) 36 degrees to 20 degrees	Stay adequately hydrated. Notify coaches of the threat of cold related illnesses. Have students and coaches dress in layers of clothing.
	Wind Chill Watch: RealFeel (wind chill) 19 degrees to 10 degrees	Stay adequately hydrated. Notify coaches of the threat of cold related illnesses. Have students and coaches dress in layers of clothing. Cover the head and neck to prevent heat loss.
	Wind Chill Warning: RealFeel (wind chill) 9 degrees to -10 degrees	Stay adequately hydrated. Notify coaches of the threat of cold related illnesses. Have students and coaches dress in layers of clothing. Cover the head and neck to prevent heat loss. Consider postponing practice to a time when RealFeel temp is much higher. Consider reducing the amount of time for an outdoor practice session.
<b>REQUIRED</b>	Wind Chill Alert: RealFeel (wind chill) -11 degrees or lower	No outside activity, practice, or contest should be held!

**Activities in Extreme Heat:**

- All coaches and any faculty or volunteer that participate in school-sponsored activities should be familiar with the signs and symptoms of heat diseases (Table 1).
- Athletes and participants should inform coaches and other necessary personnel of any pre-existing medical condition that might increase their risk of heat illness prior to participating.
- Athletes should be allowed to acclimate to exercise in the heat gradually over 10 to 14 days. This can be done by progressively increase the intensity and duration of work in the heat.
- Well-acclimatized athletes should train for 1 to 2 hours under the same heat conditions that will be present for their event.
- Heat index (RealFeel temperature) will be checked when the air temperature is 80 degrees (Fahrenheit) or higher.
- At RealFeel temperatures of 95F and greater, heat disorders such as cramps, heat exhaustion, and heatstroke are possible. Students should be kept out of the sun and strenuous activities should be eliminated. Encourage students to drink plenty of water and wear light-colored, lightweight clothing.

	RealFeel (Heat Index) under 79 degrees	Full activity. No restrictions
<b>R E C O M M E N D E D</b>	Heat Index Caution: RealFeel (Heat Index) 80 degrees to 85 degrees	Provide ample water and multiple water breaks. Monitor athletes for heat illness. Consider reducing the amount of time for the practice session.
	Heat Index Watch: RealFeel (Heat Index) 86 degrees to 90 degrees	Provide ample water and multiple water breaks. Monitor athletes for heat illness. Consider postponing practice to a time when ReelFeel temp is lower. Consider reducing the amount of time for the practice session. 1 hour of recovery time for every hour of practice (ex. 2hr practice = 2hr recovery time).
	Heat Index Warning: RealFeel (Heat Index) 91 degrees to 95 degrees	Provide ample water and water breaks every 15 minutes. Monitor athletes for heat illness. Consider postponing practice to a time when RealFeel temp is much lower. Consider reducing the amount of time for the practice session. 1 hour of recovery time for every hour of practice (ex. 2hr practice = 2hr recovery time). Light weight and loose fitting clothes should be worn. For Practices only Football Helmets should be worn. No other protective equipment should be worn.
<b>REQUIRED</b>	Heat Index Alert: RealFeel (Heat Index) 96 degrees or greater	No outside activity, practice or contest, should be held. Inside activity should only be held if air conditioned.

## NYSPHSAA THUNDER & LIGHTNING POLICY

*(Effective 10/25/04)*

*(Revised October 20, 2008)*

Applies to regular season through NYSPHSAA Finals:

1) Thunder and lightning necessitates that contests be suspended. The occurrence of thunder and/or lightning is not subject to interpretation or discussion - thunder is thunder, lightning is lightning.

a) With your site administrator, set up a plan for shelter prior to the start of any contest.

2) When thunder is heard and/or when lightning is seen, the following procedures should be adhered to:

a) Suspend play and direct participants to go to shelter, a building normally occupied by the public or if a building is unavailable, participants should go inside a vehicle with a solid metal top (e.g. bus, van, car).

b) Do not permit people to stand under or near a tree; and have all stay away from poles, antennas, towers and underground watering systems.

c) After thunder and/or lightning have left the area, wait 30 minutes after the last boom is heard or strike is seen before resuming play or competition.

## Know what to do if someone is struck by lightning.

Lightning victims do not carry an electrical charge, are safe to handle, and need immediate medical attention. Cardiac arrest is the immediate cause of death in lightning fatalities. Some deaths can be prevented if the victim immediately receives the proper first aid.

- ▶ **Call for help.** Call 9-1-1 or your local ambulance service.
- ▶ **Give first aid.** Check the victim's pulse and breathing. Begin CPR if necessary. An Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) may also be useful if one is available.
- ▶ **If possible, move the victim to a safer place.** An active thunderstorm is still dangerous. Don't let the rescuers become victims. Lightning CAN strike the same place twice.

## Stay informed, listen to NOAA Weather Radio!

There are an estimated 25 million cloud-to-ground lightning flashes in the United States each year. While the National Weather Service issues severe thunderstorm watches and warnings for storms that produce damaging wind or hail, watches and warnings are NOT issued for lightning. However, **the sound of thunder should serve as an immediate warning of the lightning danger.**

As a further safety measure, officials at outdoor events may want to have a tone-alert NOAA Weather Radio. The radio will allow you to monitor any short-term forecasts for changing weather conditions, and the tone-alert feature can automatically alert you in case a severe thunderstorm watch or warning is issued. To find your nearest NOAA weather radio transmitter, go to [www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr](http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr) and click on "Station Listing and Coverage."

**A SEVERE THUNDERSTORM** is defined as a storm that produces wind gusts of 58 mph or greater, and/or hail 3/4 of an inch or larger in diameter.

**A SEVERE THUNDERSTORM WATCH** is issued when conditions are favorable for severe weather to develop.

**A SEVERE THUNDERSTORM WARNING** is issued when severe weather is imminent.



## Lightning Safety Awareness Week

is the last full week of June. For additional information on lightning or lightning safety, visit NOAA's lightning safety web site:

[www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov](http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov)

**Lightning Kills . . .  
Play It Safe!**

Remember that all thunderstorms produce lightning and all lightning can be deadly to those outside.

U.S. Department of Commerce  
National Oceanic and  
Atmospheric Administration  
NOAA's National Weather Service



This safety guide has been prepared to help coaches and sports officials recognize the dangers of lightning and take appropriate safety precautions

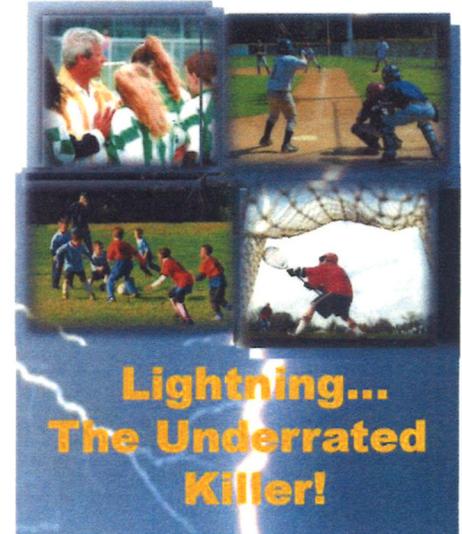


**National Lightning  
Safety Institute**

NOAA PA20046

## Coaches & Sports Officials Guide to

# Lightning Safety



**A Safety Guide**

# Lightning Kills . . . Play it Safe!

Each year in the United States, more than 400 people are struck by lightning. On average, about 70 people are killed and many others suffer permanent neurological disabilities. Most of these tragedies can be avoided if proper precautions are taken. When thunderstorms threaten, coaches and sports officials must not let the desire to start or complete an athletic activity hinder their judgment when the safety of participants and spectators is in jeopardy.

## Know the basic facts about lightning and its dangers.

- ▶ **All thunderstorms produce lightning and are dangerous.** In an average year, lightning kills more people in the U.S. than either tornadoes or hurricanes.
- ▶ **Lightning often strikes outside the area of heavy rain and may strike as far as 10 miles from any rainfall.** Many deaths from lightning occur ahead of storms because people wait too long before seeking shelter, or after storms because people return outside too soon.
- ▶ **If you hear thunder, you are in danger.** Anytime thunder is heard, the thunderstorm is close enough to pose an immediate lightning threat to your location.
- ▶ **Lightning leaves many victims with permanent disabilities.** While only a small percentage of lightning strike victims die, many survivors must learn to live with very serious, lifelong disabilities.

## Avoid the lightning threat.

- ▶ **Plan ahead.** Have a lightning safety plan. Know where people will go for safety and how much time it will take for them to get there. Have specific guidelines for suspending the event or activity so that everyone has time to reach safety. Follow the plan without exception.

- ▶ **Postpone activities.** Prior to a practice or event, check the latest forecast. If thunderstorms are forecast, consider postponing activities early to avoid being caught in a dangerous situation.
- ▶ **Monitor the weather.** Watch and listen for clues of impending danger. Look for darkening skies, flashes of lightning, or increasing wind, which may be signs of a developing or approaching thunderstorm. Listen for thunder.
- ▶ **Get to a safe place.** If you hear thunder, suspend your activity immediately and instruct everyone to get to a safe place. Substantial buildings provide the best protection. Once inside, stay off corded phones and away from any wiring or plumbing. Avoid sheds, small or open shelters, dugouts, bleachers, or grandstands. If a sturdy building is not nearby, a hard-topped metal vehicle with the windows closed will offer good protection.
- ▶ **Stay inside.** Do not resume activities until 30 minutes have passed since the last thunder was heard.

## What you should do if you can't get to a safe place.

Being outside during a thunderstorm puts you at risk of being struck by lightning. The measures listed below will reduce that risk somewhat, but are no substitute for getting to a safe place.

- ▶ **Avoid open areas and stay away from isolated tall trees, towers, or utility poles.** Lightning tends to strike the taller objects.

- ▶ **Stay away from metal bleachers, backstops, and fences.** Lightning can travel long distances through metal.
- ▶ **Spread out.** This reduces the risk of multiple lightning casualties.

## If you feel your hair stand on end, lightning is about to strike.

There may be little or nothing you can do to keep from being struck by lightning. As a last desperate resort:

- ▶ **Crouch down on the balls of your feet, put your hands over your ears, and bend your head down.** Make yourself as small a target as possible and minimize your contact with the ground.
- ▶ **Do not lie flat on the ground.**

