



## Lightning Policy Statement

Set fourth by the PSAC – Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference

“At all PSAC Regular Season and Championship Events, the host Certified Athletic Trainer has the unchallengeable authority to postpone any contest due to the threat of lightning. Additionally, the Certified Athletic Trainer has the lone authority to restart the postponed contest after consulting with game administrators and officials.”

### **Bloomsburg University Athletic Training Lightning Safety Policy**

#### **Purpose**

The keys to lightning safety are education and prevention. Education begins with learning appropriate lightning safety tips. Prevention of lightning injuries or casualties should begin long before any athletic event. This policy will outline lightning safety terminology, procedures, and decision making policies.

#### **Scope**

This policy governs all Bloomsburg University varsity intercollegiate athletic events.

#### **I. Monitor Weather Conditions**

Athletics personnel (Certified Athletic Trainers and coaches) must check weather reports each day before any practice or event. The National Weather Service (NWS) issues severe weather and/or thunderstorm watches and/or warnings. A “watch” means conditions are favorable for severe weather to develop in a particular area. A “warning” means the NWS has reported severe weather in an area and for anyone in that area to take the necessary precautions.

Athletics personnel should be aware of the signs of thunderstorms developing nearby. Thunderstorms can grow from towering, “fluffy” cumulus clouds to lightning producers in as little as (30) thirty minutes. Lightning and thunder activity in the local area are the “alarms” for athletics personnel to begin monitoring thunderstorm activity, such as directions of storm movement and distance to the lightning flashes.

#### **II. Evacuation Criteria**

##### **A. Flash to Bang Time**

To use Flash to Bang Time, count the seconds from the time lightning is sighted to when the clap of thunder is heard. Divide this number by five (5) to obtain how far away (in miles) the lightning is occurring. (Ex. 30 sec. count / 5 = 6 mile distance)



A Flash to Bang Time of thirty (30) seconds or less dictates the immediate suspension of practice/events and evacuation of all athletes and spectators to a safe area. (This is equivalent to 6 miles away or less.) Once it has been decided to stop a Bloomsburg University athletic practice/event, it is strongly recommended that all persons involved wait at least thirty (30) minutes after all lightning and thunder activity has ceased before resuming any athletics activity.

## B. Activity Stoppage

*Practice:* The decision regarding stoppage of a Bloomsburg University athletics practice is for the on-site Staff Certified Athletic Trainer to make only.

*Intercollegiate Event:* The decision regarding stoppage of play of an official game or contest is the domain of the on-site Staff Certified Athletic Trainer to make after consulting with game administrators and officials. This authority is unchallengeable and was set fourth by the PSAC – Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference.

All coaches, officials, and administrators need to abide by this to ensure the safety of all athletes, coaches, games management, spectators, and all others who may be present.

The Bloomsburg University on-site Staff Certified Athletic Trainer has the authority, in cases where this decision is questioned by an official, administrator, or opposing coach, to remove their respective team from the playing field. This decision will be fully supported by the Bloomsburg University Athletic Department.

**\*\*It is important to note that blue skies and no rain are not protection from lightning. Lightning can strike from a distance as far as 10 miles.\*\***

## C. Shelter

### 1. Safe areas include:

- enclosed buildings
- fully enclosed metal vehicles with a hard metal roof and windows up
- low ground areas as a last resort(ditches, bottom of hill) – assume a crouched position – minimize your body area – do not lie flat

### 2. Unsafe areas include:

- open fields
- golf carts / gators
- metal bleachers (on or under)
- fences
- umbrellas, flag poles, light poles
- tall trees
- pools of standing water



Avoid using a telephone (except cellular), showers, use of electrical machines (computers, fac, etc.)

Safe Areas for Bloomsburg University athletic teams, staff, personnel, administrators, officials, and spectators to use in the event of lightning.

Upper Campus

- Nelson Field House
- Monty's dining facility
- The Tennis house – as of summer 2006
- Personal vehicles – metal top with windows up

In the event of lightning at an official game, the announcer should immediately be notified to announce to all spectators to leave the area and to seek shelter in one of the aforementioned safe areas until such time that it is safe to return, or the competition is cancelled or postponed.

### **III. Emergency Action Plan**

In the event that a Bloomsburg University and/or visiting team athlete, coach, administrator, official, or spectator is struck by lightning; the following protocol will be executed.

- Any person struck by lightning does not carry an electrical charge – there is no danger presented to the healthcare provider.
- Assess the scene to ensure safety for a qualified health care personnel to enter. This may include transporting the victim to a safe environment before initiating first aid procedures.
- A Staff Certified Athletic Trainer will evaluate the victim, activate Emergency Medical Services, and provide necessary first aid, which may include CPR and Rescue Breathing.

This policy is set in accordance with NCAA Guidelines and Recommendations as set fourth by the Sports Medicine Handbook.