

AACPS Athletics Updated Lightning Procedures

(implemented as of March 1, 2023)

AACPS & AACO is committed to the health and safety of our athletes and coaches. We are happy to share that the BOE has updated technology to detect real time lightning through Earth Networks' Outdoor Alerting System (OAS). The OAS is powered by Earth Networks' Total Lightning Network, which is capable of detecting both in-cloud and cloud-to-ground lightning. AACPS has lightning detection systems on each of our comprehensive high schools. All systems will utilize county established on/off activation times/settings.

- The systems will be "on" from 7 am to 10 pm, 7 days a week.
- **When lightning is detected** in an 8-mile radius of the school, a horn sounds for 15 seconds alerting all people in the area to seek shelter. At the same time, a strobe light will be activated on the detection system that will remain in effect for the entire at-risk time frame.
- All coaches, athletic trainers, officials and field staff present will immediately suspend all outdoor activities and instruct all people in the vicinity to seek shelter.
- **NO ONE** should ignore, disregard, or delay in clearing the outside area immediately upon lightning detection.
- Any coach, official or field staff may evacuate an outside area during a practice or warm-up period whenever they declare it unsafe and may lead all participants to the nearest shelter.
- **Under NFHS and MPSSAA rules, and in line with AACO Guidelines**, officials have control of an athletic contest once it begins and may discontinue or delay a contest whenever they declare a health and safety hazard. However, our local officials associations have been directed to evacuate immediately and seek shelter when the alarm sounds.
- **Once lightning has not been detected** by the system in the area for 30 minutes, **there will be three, 5-second horn alerts, along with an all-clear signal** to field staff and coaches participating phones and computers, notifying safety to return to the outdoor area.
- Where multiple alarms sound, the event may be concluded/postponed in accordance with sports-specific rules.
- If play resumes and is suspended for a second time, field staff/officials/coaches may opt to not wait the thirty minutes and conclude/postpone the event at that point. Games should not be started or restarted if they cannot complete at least half of the game. No youth games will start or restart after 8 pm. **If in doubt contact the specific sports supervisor for clarification/approval.**
- **Adult games scheduled to begin at 9pm, follow the detection system until 10:00pm and then the responsibility will fall to the game official to make the call.**



LIVE ALERT UPDATES GO TO: <https://www.aacps.org/page/lightning-detection-system>