

## ***Lightning and Thunder***

### **If the park has a lightning alerting system.**

Follow the lightning alert system.

As of Spring 2021, Howard County will have active lightning alerts systems in Cedar Lane Park, Rockburn Branch Park and Western Regional Park. By Fall of 2021, Savage Park and Centennial Park.

Each Howard County system is equipped with a horn and strobe light. The horn and strobe light will activate for 15-seconds once it senses lightning 10-miles from the park. At that time, all activities (including games and practices) will cease so that park visitors may seek shelter.

Once lightning is no longer a threat, the horn will sound in three, 5-second bursts. Activities, games and practices can then resume.

### **If the park does not have a lightning alerting system, conform to the following guidelines.**

Games should not be continued under unsafe conditions. It is extremely unsafe if there is thunder or lightning in the area. If you can see it or If you can hear it, it is already too close. STOP your game, clear the field, advise all participants to seek protective shelter immediately and do so yourself preferable in the umpire camp. Wait 30 minutes from the last lightning bolt or thunder screech before re-starting.

On a multiple field complex, the minute one field suspends for lightning or thunder, all fields shall suspend and seek shelter.

### **The national weather service guiding principle**

The national weather service has stated that lightning can strike up to a distance of 10 miles, with storms traveling at a speed of 50 miles per hour. However, thunder can be heard only within a distance of 8 miles. Therefore, if you hear thunder and/or see lightning, you are in immediate danger and should seek protective shelter in an indoor facility at once! An indoor facility is recommended as the safest protective shelter. However, if an indoor location is not available, an automobile is a relatively safe alternative. If not available, the following guidelines are recommended. Avoid standing under large trees and telephone poles. If the only alternative is a tree, choose a small tree in a wooded area that is not on a hill. As a last alternative, find a ravine or valley. In all instances outdoors, assume the aforementioned crouched position. Avoid standing water and metal objects at all times (I.e.-steering wheel, bats, umbrellas, bleachers, etc.)

The most dangerous storm gives little or no warning: Thunder and lightning are not heard or seem. Up to 40% of all lightning is not accompanied by thunder and 20-40% of thunder cannot be heard because of atmospheric disturbances, thus the term "silent killer". At times, the only natural forewarning that proceeds a strike is feeling your hair standing on end and skin tingle.

At this point, you are in imminent danger of being struck by lightning and should drop to the ground and assume the aforementioned crouched position immediately. Do not lie flat. Should a ground strike occur near you, lying flat increases the body's surface area that is exposed to the current traveling through the ground.

A perilous misconception that it is possible to see lightning coming and have time to act before it strikes could prove to be fatal. In reality, the lightning that we see flashing is actually the return stroke flashing upward from the ground to the cloud, not downward. When you see the lightning strike, it has already hit. *It is a fact that you will never see the bolt that hits you.* If used immediately, the information provided can be used to minimize the risk of injury or death from lightning