



## Dartmouth College Sports Medicine Policies and Procedures Manual

Section: **Inclement Weather**  
Subsection : **Lightning**

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Lightning is a dangerous phenomenon. Athletic teams that practice and compete while outdoors are at risk when the weather turns inclement. While generally infrequent in our area, lightning storms do occasionally develop and can pose a significant risk to our athletes who may be participating in outdoor activities. This lightning safety policy has been developed to provide information to coaches, administrators, event managers and athletic trainers who oversee these activities. It will serve to minimize the potential risk posed by lightning in our area.

### **DETERMINATION OF DANGER:**

The flash-to-bang method of lightning proximity will be used to determine when a dangerous situation develops.

1. Count the number of seconds from the time a lightning flash is seen until the thunder is heard.
2. If the flash-to-bang is 30 seconds or less, activity should be suspended and everyone should immediately seek out the nearest shelter.

### **SUSPENSION OF ACTIVITY:**

1. Suspension of practices:
  - A. Whenever present, a member of the Dartmouth College Sports Medicine Staff will monitor the weather when it appears an electrical storm may be imminent. The athletic trainer will notify the head coach when a dangerous situation develops which must result in immediate suspension of activity until the danger has passed.
  - B. When an athletic trainer is not present, the supervising coach is responsible for monitoring the weather and determining when the conditions become unsafe.
2. Suspension of competition:
  - A. A member of the Sports Medicine Staff or athletic department representative will meet with game officials prior to the event. He/she will explain our process of detecting dangerous lightning and will offer to notify them if there is imminent danger from lightning.
  - B. The athletic administration and game officials will then decide whether to suspend play.
3. Evacuation of facility:
  - A. The decision to evacuate an area will apply to participants, coaches, support staff, officials, and spectators.



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- B. Once the decision has been made to suspend practice or competition due to lightning, the head coach should see that all athletes, coaches, support staff and game officials are removed from the facility and into the nearest shelter as soon as possible.
- C. It will be the event manager's role to direct spectators of competitions to the nearest shelter.

**SAFETY LOCATIONS:**

Memorial Field:	Alumni Gym or Floren Varsity House
Red Rolfe Field:	Alumni Gym or Floren Varsity House
Topliff Tennis Courts:	Davis Varsity House
Chase/Blackman grass:	Boss Tennis Center
Burnham Field:	Thompson Arena
Scully-Fahey Field:	Boss Tennis Center
Chase Astro turf:	Boss Tennis Center
Sachem Field:	Campion Arena or cars/vans/buses
Garipay Fields:	Corey Ford Clubhouse
Connecticut River:	Rowing Boathouse or nearest shoreline shelter
Mascoma Lake:	Boathouse Sailing Facility or nearest shoreline shelter
Hanover Country Club:	Clubhouse or Firestation or shelter at #12 Tee Box

**RESUMPTION OF ACTIVITY:**

Activity, once suspended, should not resume until 30 minutes have passed since the last lightning strike with a flash-to-bang less than 30 seconds. During competition, resumption of play will be determined by consultation between game officials, athletic trainers, coaches, and athletic administrators.

**REFERENCES:**

1. National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA) - Walsh KM, Bennett B, Cooper M, Holle, RL, Kithil R, Lopez, RE. **National Athletic Trainers' Association Position Statement: Lightning Safety for Athletics and Recreation.** *Journal of Athletic Training.* 2000;35(4):471-477.



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1. You should not be in contact with metal objects during an electrical storm. Avoid metal bleacher seats, golf clubs, aluminum bats, and fences.
2. Avoid single trees, tall objects or standing together in a group.
3. The existence of blue skies and/or absence of rain are not protection from lightning. Lightning can strike from as far as 10 miles away.
4. Avoid using a landline telephone.
5. Avoid standing in water and open fields.
6. A person who has been struck by lightning does not carry an electrical charge. It is safe for responders to perform CPR and has been shown effective in reviving lightning strike victims.
7. If you are unable to reach a safe shelter and lightning is imminent, you should assume the “safety” position. Crouch down with only your feet touching the ground. Keep your feet close together. Wrap your arms around your knees and lower your head to minimize your body’s surface area. Do not lie flat on the ground.
8. If you feel your hair stand on end, feel your skin tingle, or hear crackling noises, you should immediately assume the safety position.