

**APPENDIX C**  
**COLONIAL LEAGUE THUNDER AND/OR LIGHTNING POLICY**  
(Amended Fall 2018)

(Note: The mechanical malfunctioning of lights for an evening contest shall be treated in the same manner as thunder and/or lightning-caused delays.)

If thunder is heard or lightning is visible anywhere from the field of play or bleachers at any outdoor contest, the following action(s) will be taken:

1. Administrator/Game Manager in charge will direct game officials to delay the contest for at least thirty (30) minutes.
  - a. Administrator/ Game Manager will direct game officials to the nearest indoor shelter or to their team busses. (Dugouts are not a safe shelter while lightning is present.)
  - b. Administrator/Game Manager will direct fans to vacate the bleachers and seek shelter.
  - c. **Use NFHS Guidelines on Page 3 of this document.**
2. Reassessment of thunder and/or lightning conditions shall be made by the administrator/game manager and head official at two (2) thirty (30) minute intervals up to a one (1) hour delay. \*\*\*
3. If thunder and/or lightning persists after one (1) hour delay, the contest will be deemed suspended unless the administrator/game manager and the head coaches from both teams agree that continuing to delay would be in the best interest of the student-athletes involved. The administrator/game manager and the head coaches shall determine the maximum amount of time to delay before the game is deemed suspended.
4. If the contest is deemed suspended due to thunder and/or lightning or any event beyond the control of the administrator/game manager in charge, the following National Federation/USTA/USGA/PIAA rules shall apply:
  - a. **Football & Basketball** –the contest shall be continued from the point of interruption on the rescheduled date, unless the teams involved agree to terminate the game with the existing score.
  - b. **Soccer & Field Hockey** –Suspended game. Re-start at point of suspension if less than one half is played. If more than one-half is played and if a winner is determined, it is an official game and the result stands. If a winner cannot be determined, it is an official game, and by mutual agreement of the schools the game is terminated and the result stands or the game is resumed from the point of suspension.

- i. **Field Hockey Playoff** –if a playoff game is interrupted at any time during the contest, the contest shall be continued from the point of interruption on the rescheduled date. If the interruption occurs after the completion of the first half, by mutual agreement of the coaches, the game can be considered complete.
- c. **Cross Country** – any race that has not been completed, the entire race must be rerun on the rescheduled date.
- d. **Tennis** –the contest shall be continued from the point of interruption on the rescheduled date.
- e. **Golf** – the contest shall be continued from the last completed hole on the rescheduled date.
- f. **Wrestling** –the contest shall be continued from the point of interruption on the rescheduled date.
- g. **Baseball & Softball** –if interrupted after 5 complete innings or if the home team has scored a greater number of runs than the visiting team has scored in 4 1/2 innings, the game is considered complete. If less than 5 complete innings have been completed, the game shall be continued from the point of interruption on the rescheduled date.
  - i. **\*\*\* After a thirty (30) minute delay, the umpire can suspend or call the game.**
- h. **Track & Field** –the contest shall be continued from the point of interruption. All trials and marks, up until the point of interruption shall stand.



# GUIDELINES ON HANDLING PRACTICES AND CONTESTS DURING LIGHTNING OR THUNDER DISTURBANCES

These guidelines provide a default policy to those responsible or sharing duties for making decisions concerning the suspension and restarting of practices and contests based on the presence of lightning or thunder. The preferred sources from which to request such a policy for your facility would include your state high school activities association and the nearest office of the National Weather Service.

## PROACTIVE PLANNING

1. Assign staff to monitor local weather conditions before and during practices and contests.
2. Develop an evacuation plan, including identification of appropriate nearby safer areas and determine the amount of time needed to get everyone to a designated safer area:
  - a. A designated safer place is a substantial building with plumbing and wiring where people live or work, such as a school, gymnasium or library. An alternate safer place from the threat of lightning is a fully enclosed (not convertible or soft top) metal car or school bus.
3. Develop criteria for suspension and resumption of play:
  - a. When thunder is heard or lightning is seen\*, the leading edge of the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Suspend play for at least 30 minutes and vacate the outdoor activity to the previously designated safer location immediately.
  - b. 30-minute rule. Once play has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or lightning is witnessed\* prior to resuming play.
  - c. Any subsequent thunder or lightning\* after the beginning of the 30-minute count will reset the clock and another 30-minute count should begin.
  - d. When lightning-detection devices or mobile phone apps are available, this technology could be used to assist in making a decision to suspend play if a lightning strike is noted to be within 10 miles of the event location. However, you should never depend on the reliability of these devices and, thus, hearing thunder or seeing lightning\* should always take precedence over information from a mobile app or lightning-detection device.

\* – At night, under certain atmospheric conditions, lightning flashes may be seen from distant storms. In these cases, it may be safe to continue an event. If no thunder can be heard and the flashes are low on the horizon, the storm may not pose a threat. Independently verified lightning detection information would help eliminate any uncertainty.

4. Review the lightning safety policy annually with all administrators, coaches and game personnel and train all personnel.
5. Inform student-athletes and their parents of the lightning policy at start of the season.