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Memorandum

To: DCPS Athletic Directors and Coaches

Date: September 4, 2008

RE: Lightning Procedures

Please be aware that our athletic events are sometimes at risk of threatening storms. The attached recommendations further promote the need for our coaches to act prudently during these dangerous situations. Please print and review these recommendations.

Briefly:

It is understood that your role during inclement weather should involve/include :

I. Chain of Command

- The responsibility for removing athletes from a practice/scrimmage area due to the threat of lightning lies with the head coach of that particular sport.
- In the event the head coach is not present, an assistant coach designated by the head coach will assume responsibility.
- The responsibility for removing athletes from a game area due to the threat of lightning lies with the official, referee or umpire in charge.
- It is the responsibility of the head coach to inform the official, referee or umpire in charge and the visiting team's head coach of the lightning policy.
- It is the responsibility of the head coach present to monitor the weather and advise the official, referee or umpire in charge on the situation

II. Means of Monitoring Weather

- The DCPS supports the use of a portable lightning detector for use during athletic practices and games.
- Flash/Bang Method: Count the number of seconds which past between a lightning strike (flash) and the following sound of thunder (bang). Take the number of seconds between flash and bang then divide by five, the resulting number is the approximate distance, in miles, from the practice/game area to the lightning flash

III. Suspension and Resumption of Athletic Activity

- **Suspension of athletic activity should occur when lightning is within eight miles or the Flash/Bang ratio reaches forty (40) seconds.**
- **Flash/Bang can be used in conjunction with the lightning detector, if available and local weather reports to make a sound decision.**
- **Resumption of athletic activity should not occur until thirty (30) minutes after the last lightning flash is seen.**

IV. Safe Locations from a Lightning Hazard

- Any fully enclosed, substantial building; ideally with plumbing, electrical wiring and telephone service which aid in grounding the building.
- If a substantial building is not available, a fully enclosed vehicle with a metal roof and the windows completely enclosed is a reasonable alternative.
- Cellular or cordless telephones should be used for summoning help during a thunderstorm. They are a reasonably safer alternative to land-line telephones.

V. Unsafe Locations from a Lightning Hazard

- Small structures such as rain or picnic shelters or athletic storage sheds should be avoided during thunderstorms.
- Convertible vehicles and golf carts do not provide a high level of protection and cannot be considered safe from lightning.
- Locker-room shower areas, swimming pools (indoor and outdoor), land-line telephones and electrical appliances are also unsafe due to the possible contact with current carrying conduction.

VI. If No Safe Location is Available

- Find a thick grove of small trees surrounded by taller trees or a dry ditch.
- Stay away from the tallest trees or objects (i.e. light poles or flag poles), metal objects (i.e. fences or bleachers), individual trees, standing pools of water, and open fields.
- Assume a crouched position on the ground with only the balls of your feet touching the ground, head lowered and cover your ears. **DO NOT LIE FLAT!**
- A person who feels his/her hair stand on end or skin tingle should immediately assume the position described above.

VII. Obligation to Warn

- According to a basic principle of tort law, an individual has a duty to warn others of dangers that may not be obvious to a guest of that person.
- A public address message should be given warning spectators of DCPS athletic events if lightning activity becomes an imminent danger in the immediate area.
- Lightning safety information and tips should be published in game programs and media guides.