PHILOSOPHY
The Department of Intercollegiate Athletics at Lamar University believes that the safety of student-athletes and members of the coaching staff is of the utmost importance. Lightning and severe weather bring unique hazards to sporting events and endanger physically active people as well as spectators. “Millions of lightning flashes strike the ground annually in the United States, causing nearly 100 deaths and 400 injuries.” (NATA Position Statement: Lightning Safety, 2000) The majority of these lightning casualties occur between May and September and between 10am and 7pm, coinciding with common hours of athletic participation. Because of this danger, compliance with this policy is mandatory for the safety of Lamar University’s student-athletes and members of the coaching staff.

POLICY
Chain of Command:

Athletic Practice
1. The athletic training department will be responsible for daily monitoring of weather and notifying coaching staff members of any possible inclement weather prior to any outdoors athletic activity.
2. The decision to terminate a Lamar University athletic practice in the event of lightning and/or severe weather will be made by a member of the Lamar University Athletic Training staff present at the practice, in consultation with the head coach and/or his/her designee.
3. If there is not a member of the Lamar University Athletic Training staff present at an athletic practice, the decision to terminate practice will be made solely by the head coach and/or his/her designee.
4. The responsibility of monitoring for lightning and severe weather at an athletic practice lies with all members of the coaching staff and athletic training staff present at the practice.

Athletic Competition
5. The game manager for outdoor competitions will have the ability to monitor weather conditions in real-time via the Telvent DTN website.
6. The decision to terminate a Lamar University athletic competition in the event of lightning and/or severe weather will be made by the Lamar University Game Administrator in consultation with a member of the Lamar University Athletic Training staff, the head coach and/or his/her designee, the game official(s) and/or umpire(s), and Lamar University Police personnel.
7. The responsibility of monitoring for lightning and severe weather at an athletic competition lies with the game administrator and the member(s) of the athletic training staff present at the competition.

Means of Monitoring Weather:
1. (Primary) Lamar University utilizes Telvent DTN MxVision WeatherSentry Online – Turf Edition as the primary method of lightning and severe weather detection. Telvent DTN is a real-time weather monitoring service. Users are notified via text message of lightning and weather alerts. Desired users should contact the head athletic trainer to be added to the notification list.
   a. Telvent DTN monitors and advises for National Weather Service “watches” and “warnings” in addition to inclement weather and lightning, and will be utilized as such.
2. (Secondary) Field Pro 2 Lightning Detection System (Coach Vernon Glass Football Practice Facility only)
   a. The unit is located on the storage shed at the practice facility. The control unit is locked to prevent tampering. The code may be obtained from the head athletic trainer.
   b. The unit must be turned on before use. Push the On/OFF button then wait 4 seconds. To activate the horn, push the horn button. A blinking green LED indicates that the detector is operational
   c. The unit utilizes a LED display to indicate lightning strike distances as follows:
      i. 20-40 miles range: green LED lights and blinks for 60 seconds
      ii. 8-20 miles range: blue and green LEDs will light; blue LED blinks for 60 seconds
      iii. 3-8 miles range: yellow, blue and green LEDs light; yellow LED blinks for 60 seconds
      iv. 0-3 miles range; ALL LEDs light; red LED will blink for 60 seconds

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3. (Secondary) Flash/Bang Method
   a. Count the number of seconds which pass between a lightning strike (flash) and the following sound of thunder (bang) by counting one-one thousand, two-one thousand, etc. 
   b. Take the number of seconds between flash and bang and divide by five. The resulting number is the approximate distance, in miles, from the location of the event to the lightning.

Suspension and Resumption of Athletic Activity:
1. Suspension of athletic activity should occur when
   a. An alert is received from Telvent DTN indicating a lightning strike within 0-8 miles of the University
   b. Or, the Field Pro 2 indicates a lightning strike within the 0-3 or 3-8 miles range (red/yellow LEDs)
   c. Or, lightning is within eight miles, as determined by the Flash/Bang Method (40 seconds)
2. The decision to suspend activity may be based on any of the aforementioned methods utilized in any combination. The decision may be supplemented by local weather reports.
3. When in doubt of the severity or proximity of lightning or severe weather, suspend activity and seek appropriate shelter.
4. Upon suspension of athletic activities, all University personnel and student-athletes should proceed immediately to a designated “safe area”.
5. Resumption of activity should not occur until:
   a. Telvent DTN will send an “All Clear” message to all alert recipients thirty (30) minutes after the last detected strike in within the 0-8 mile range.

Declared “Safe Area” Guidelines:
1. Any fully enclosed, substantial building; ideally with plumbing, electrical wiring, and telephone service, all of which aid in grounding the building.
2. A fully enclosed metal vehicle (not a convertible) with the windows completely closed.
3. Cellular or cordless telephones should be used inside the safe area for summoning help during a thunderstorm.
4. A list of venue-specific Designated Safe Areas may be found in Appendix A.

Declared “Un-safe Area” Guidelines:
1. Small or non-fully enclosed structures, such as storage sheds, picnic shelters, and baseball dugouts and open batting cages should be avoided during severe weather and lightning.
2. Convertible vehicles and golf carts do not provide adequate protection from a lightning strike and should be avoided.
3. Locker-room shower areas, indoor and outdoor swimming pools, whirlpools, and land-line telephones are also unsafe due to possible contact with current carrying conduction.

If no “Safe Area” is Available:
1. Find a thick of small trees surrounded by taller trees, or a dry ditch.
2. Stay away from the tallest trees or objects (light poles, flag poles, etc), any metal objects (bleachers, storage sheds, and fences), individual trees, standing pools of water, and open fields.
3. Assume a crouched position on the ground with only the balls of your feet in contact with the ground, head lowered, and cover your ears.
4. DO NOT LIE FLAT!
5. A person who feels his/her hair stand on end or skin tingle should immediately assume the position described above.

Obligation to Warn:
1. 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.
2. A public address message shall be given warning spectators of Lamar University athletic events if lightning activity becomes an imminent danger in the immediate area. An example of such message is included in Appendix B.
3. Lightning safety information and tips should be published in game programs and media guides of outdoor athletic events.
PRE-HOSPITAL CARE OF LIGHTNING STRIKE VICTIMS

In case of a lightning strike to a Lamar University student-athlete, member of the coaching or athletic training staff, or a visitor to campus, the following procedures are to be followed:

2. Activate the local emergency system by dialing 9-1-1 from any on-campus or cellular phone. Lamar University Police Department may be reached directly at (409) 880-8311.
3. Lightning strike victims do not carry an electrical charge and are safe to assess.
4. Survey the scene and move victim to safe area as needed. Do not provide care for victim in an unsafe location if lightning or severe weather continues.
5. Assess victim and administer appropriate emergency treatment including but not limited to:
   a. Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)
   b. Use of Automated External Defibrillator (AED)
   c. Care for shock
   d. Care for hypothermia
   e. Care for burns
   f. Care for other injuries
6. Communicate with EMS personnel on condition of victim.
7. Notify Head Athletic Trainer at (409) 880-2359 or (409) 651-0529 immediately following incident.
Appendix A

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Designated Safe Areas

The following are designated safe areas for each practice and competition venue at Lamar University. In the event of severe weather and/or lightning in the immediate area, these locations are to be utilized for the safety of student-athletes and members of the coaching and athletic training staffs.

**Vincent Beck Field** (baseball)
1. Home locker-room building (except in shower areas)
2. Indoor practice facility (all doors MUST be closed; the covered batting cages are NOT lightning safe)
3. Office building
4. Public restroom building behind 1st baseline stands
5. Press Box (not to exceed maximum occupancy)

All other areas, including the dugouts, and covered batting cages, are not considered lightning safe areas.

In case of lightning or severe weather during competition, the visiting team must be allowed access to an area in the locker-room building, indoor practice facility, or the soccer field house.

**Ty Terrell Track & Thompson Family Tennis Center**
1. McDonald Gym (except in locker-room shower areas & hydrotherapy room)

All other areas, including the tennis court restrooms and pro-shop, are not considered lightning safe areas.

**Provost Umphrey Stadium** (football)
1. Field House (except in locker-room shower areas & hydrotherapy room)
2. Montagne Center (except in locker-room shower areas)

All other areas, including areas under the stadium seats, are not considered lightning safe areas.

**Coach Vernon Glass Football Practice Facility** (football)
1. Field House (except in locker-room shower areas & hydrotherapy room)

All other areas, including pavilions and storage shed, are not considered lightning safe areas.

**Soccer Stadium** (soccer)
1. Soccer Field House (except in locker-room shower areas & hydrotherapy area)

All other areas, including areas under the stadium seats and the field house breeze-way, are not considered lightning safe areas.

**Ford Park Softball Fields** (softball)
1. A fully enclosed metal vehicle (not a convertible) with the windows completely closed.

All other areas, including areas in covered stadium seating, dugouts and equipment storage areas are not considered lightning safe areas.
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Public Address Message

The following is an example of the public address message to be read for spectators of Lamar University athletic events in case of severe weather and/or danger from imminent lightning strikes in the area. Lamar University has an obligation to warn spectators of possible harms from severe weather or lightning strikes.

Due to current weather conditions including, but not limited to, lightning, thunder, and/or other severe weather, it is the policy of the Lamar University Department of Intercollegiate Athletics that all spectators immediately evacuate the grandstand and/or bleacher areas. It is advised that spectators evacuate to hard-topped vehicles until it has been determined that it is safe to return to the grandstand and bleacher areas.
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References


Copies of the NATA position statement and the NCAA Sports Medicine Handbook, Guideline 1d may be obtained from the head athletic trainer upon request.

Telvent DTN MXVision WeatherSentry Online is accessible at [http://weather.dtn.com](http://weather.dtn.com). The service is an annual subscription service for Lamar University Athletic Training. For complete details of Telvent DTN services provided to Lamar University, contact the head athletic trainer.