

OYSTER RIVER YOUTH ASSOCIATION



Thunder and Lightning Policy

The safety of OYRA players, coaches, management and spectators is the primary concern. By understanding and following the below information, the safety of everyone shall be greatly increased. Waiting to stop play or not waiting to start play may result in a serious injury or loss of life.

Lightning awareness should be increased with the first flash of lightning or the first clap of thunder, no matter how far away. This activity must be treated as a wake-up call to all. The most important aspect to monitor is how far away the lightning is occurring, and how fast the storm is approaching, relative to the distance of a safe shelter. Recognize that personal observation of lightning may not be sufficient.

30/30 RULE

When you see lightning, count the time until you hear thunder. If this time is thirty (30) seconds or less, seek proper shelter. Wait thirty (30) minutes or more after hearing the last thunder before leaving the shelter.

THUNDER ONLY

If you cannot see the lightning, just hearing the thunder will also initiate the 30/30 RULE. Thunder always accompanies lightning, even though its audible range can be diminished due to background noise in the immediate environment and its distance from the observer. If you cannot see lightning but hear thunder you must assume lightning is nearby.

SHELTER

Safe structure or location is defined as: Any building normally occupied or frequently used by people, i.e., a building with plumbing and / or electrical wiring that acts to electrically ground the structure. Avoid using shower facilities for safe shelter and do not use the showers or plumbing facilities during a thunderstorm.

In the absence of a sturdy, frequently inhabited building, any vehicle with a hard metal roof (not a convertible or golf cart) and rolled-up windows can provide a measure of safety. A vehicle is certainly better than remaining outdoors. It is not the rubber tires that make a vehicle a safe shelter, but the hard metal roof which dissipates the lightning strike around the vehicle. Do not touch the sides of any vehicle!

If no safe structure or location is within a reasonable distance, find a thick grove of small trees surrounded by taller trees or a dry ditch. Assume a crouched position on the ground with only the balls of the feet touching the ground, wrap your arms around your knees and lower your head. Minimize contact with the ground because lightning current often enters a victim through the ground rather than by a direct overhead strike. Minimize your body's surface area and the ground! Do not lie flat! If unable

to reach safe shelter, stay away from the tallest trees or objects such as light poles or flag poles), metal objects (such as fences or bleachers), individual trees, standing pools of water, and open fields. Avoid being the highest object in a field. Do not take shelter under a single, tall tree. Avoid using the telephone, except in emergency situations. People have been struck by lightning while using a land-line telephone. A cellular phone or a portable remote phone is a safe alternative to land-line phones, if the person and the antenna are located within a safe structure or location, and if all other precautions are followed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The existence of blue sky and absence of rain are not protection from lightning. Lightning can and does strike as far as ten (10) miles away from the rain shaft. It does not have to be raining for lightning to strike. Many lightning casualties occur in the beginning, as the storm approaches, because many people ignore initial precursors of high winds, some rainfall and cloud cover.

Generally, the lightning threat diminishes with time after the last sound of thunder but may persist for more than thirty (30) minutes. Lightning can strike ahead of the parent cloud – take action even if the thunderstorm is not overhead. Be aware of how close lightning is occurring. The flash-to-bang method is the easiest and most convenient way to estimate how far away lightning is occurring.

AFTER A STRIKE

People who have been struck by lightning do not carry an electrical charge. Therefore, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is safe for the responder. If possible, an injured person should be moved to a safer location before starting CPR. Lightning-strike victims who show signs of cardiac or respiratory arrest need emergency help quickly. Prompt, aggressive CPR has been highly effective for the survival of victims of lightning strikes.