



## EL PASO PARKS AND RECREATION SPORTS COMPETITION LIGHTNING POLICY AND GUIDELINES

When inclement weather approaches, the following steps are taken for the safety of all athletes, coaches, support staff and spectators.

1. In a preventive fashion, the Recreation Program Supervisor will check or obtain an official weather report from the National Weather Service before each contest. In the event of potential thunderstorms and/or weather events such as wind, the weather conditions will be monitored via the internet or Weather Channel phone app.
2. All personnel monitor incoming severe weather using the Flash Bang method. To use the Flash Bang method, count the seconds from the time lightning/flash is sighted to when the clap/bang of thunder is heard. Divide this number by 5 and this equals how far away (in miles) the lightning is occurring. (For example, 20 second count = 4 miles).
3. Chain of command for evacuating athletic teams/spectators **during competition:**

On Site Staff → Officials → Coaching Staff → Teams and Spectators

4. All sports programs will follow the guidelines established by the El Paso Parks and Recreation Department. In the event that the Weather Channel Spark Lightning Detector reacts to nearby lightning strikes twice in the 0-8 mile range, the outdoor complex will be evacuated. The following will occur by all sporting programs during storm activity:

Indication	Reaction by Department
Severe Thunderstorm for Distance	Monitor Weather Channel App
Storm Distance 0-8 miles	Evacuation of Complex
Storm Distance 9 – above miles	Monitor for distance

**The existence of blue sky and the absence of rain are not protection from lightning.**

Lightning can, and does, strike as far as 10 miles away from the rain shaft. It does not have to be raining for lightning to strike.

It is the responsibility of the coaches for each team to remove and direct all athletes, and parents to the nearest safe facility or to their automobile. (If the head coach is not present, the assistant coach will assume responsibility.) The safe shelters are:

Sport Venue	Safe Facility
All Sports Fields	Parents Automobile OR Indoor Building (If Available)

- No team shall be allowed to return to competition for 30 minutes and is to the safe range of “Storm Distance 8 and above Miles” or no indication of lightning strikes on the detector for 30 minutes.
- The On Site Staff will inform all parties that it is safe to return to the field of play or to cancel games.