

HOWARD COUNTY OFFICIAL LIGHTNING POLICY

If thunder and/or lightning can be heard and/or seen, STOP your game and seek protective shelter immediately.

In situations where thunder and/or lightning may or may not be present yet you feel your hair stand on end and skin tingle, immediately assume the following crouched position; drop to your knees, place your hands/arms on your legs and lower your head. Do not lay flat.

In the event that either situation should occur, allow 30 minutes to pass after the last sound of thunder and/or lightning strike prior to resuming play. For HCRP games, when play is suspended the current game is done. When play is resumed it will be the next game on the schedule.

If you stop play on your field because of lightning, check the other fields in the complex. It is possible what you saw was behind your fellow umpire and they did not see it. Let them know that you have suspended play and why.

If you see play stopped on another field because of lightning, or you are told that play has been suspended on the other fields because of lightning, do NOT continue play. Bring the teams off the field.

The national weather service has stated that lightning can strike up to a distance of 10 miles, with storms traveling at a speed of 50 miles per hour. However, thunder can be heard only within a distance of 8 miles. Therefore, if you hear thunder and/or see lightning, you are in immediate danger and should seek protective shelter in an indoor facility at once! An indoor facility is recommended as the safest protective shelter. However, if an indoor location is not available, an automobile is a relatively safe alternative. If not available, the following guidelines are recommended. Avoid standing under large trees and telephone poles. If the only alternative is a tree, choose a small tree in a wooded area that is not on a hill. As a last alternative, find a ravine or valley. In all instances outdoors, assume the aforementioned crouched position. Avoid standing water and metal objects at all times (I.e.-steering wheel, bats, umbrellas, bleachers, etc.)

The most dangerous storm gives little or no warning: Thunder and lightning are not heard or seem. Up to 40% of all lightning is not accompanied by thunder and 20-40% of thunder cannot be heard because of atmospheric disturbances, thus the term "silent killer". At times, the only natural forewarning that precedes a strike is feeling your hair standing on end and skin tingle.

At this point, you are in imminent danger of being struck by lightning and should drop to the ground and assume the aforementioned crouched position immediately. Do not lie flat. Should a ground strike occur near your, lying flat increases the body's surface area that is exposed to the current traveling through the ground.

A perilous misconception that it is possible to see lightning coming and have time to act before it strikes could prove to be fatal. In reality, the lightning that we see flashing is actually the return stroke flashing upward from the ground to the cloud, not downward. When you see the lightning strike, it has already hit. *It is a fact that you will never see the bolt that hits you.* If used immediately, the information provided can be used to minimize the risk of injury or death from lightning.