

## VANDALIA PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT YOUTH SPORTS WEATHER EMERGENCY ACTION PROCEDURES



Severe weather is always a concern with outdoor athletic activities and the Vandalia Parks and Recreation Department has developed a weather emergency action procedure to ensure, to the best of our ability, the safety of each participant, coach, parent and spectator.

### **Emergency Action Plan for Lightning Storms**

Lightning is random and unpredictable. City of Vandalia employees and volunteer youth sport coaches must follow specific guidelines when the risk of lightning makes it is necessary to suspend activities and clear the area. For the first time, Vandalia is using the Thor Guard Lightning Prediction System. This state of the art lightning predictor will sound **ONE 15- second** blast of a horn when signs of lightning are detected. If the horn sounds, activities must be suspended immediately. If you are within visibility of the system, which has been installed at the Sports Complex (unit on concession roof and also on pole between baseball fields #1 & #2) and Helke Park (unit on roof of restroom building) you will also see a strobe light flashing and remain flashing until safe conditions return. All coaches, participants and spectators must immediately evacuate the athletic venue and seek safe shelter. You may resume activities only after hearing **THREE 5- second** blasts of the horn, the strobe light will also stop flashing. Coaches are responsible for following the emergency action procedures in the absence of a VPRD employee, such as during practices.

- **Locations of safe shelter**

While no place is absolutely safe from a lightning threat, some are safer than others. When activity has been suspended due to the Thor Guard Prediction System alert, participants must evacuate to one of the following suggested safe shelters:

1. **Vehicle** – Fully enclosed metal vehicles such as cars, trucks and vans with windows rolled up provide good shelter from lightning. Avoid contact with metal or conducting surfaces outside or inside the car. It is not the rubber tires that makes a vehicle safe, but the hard metal roof which dissipates a lightning strike.
2. **Vandalia Recreation Center** – Large enclosed structures tend to be much safer than smaller or open structures.
3. If you or anyone else feels their hair standing on end, and/or hear “crackling noises,” you are in lightning’s electric field. If caught outside during this time,

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immediately remove metal objects (including baseball cap), place your feet together, duck your head, and crouch down low in a baseball catcher's stance with hands on knees, do not lay flat on the ground.

- **Avoid being in or near the following areas and items:**
  1. Open fields and high places
  2. Isolated trees
  3. Open air picnic shelters, including the concession stand area
  4. Flagpoles and light poles
  5. Bleachers (metal or wood; dugouts)
  6. Metal fences
  7. Golf carts
  8. Electrical/electronic equipment
  9. Under an umbrella

• **Resumption of Athletic Activities**

**When the Thor Guard sensor detects that danger has passed (a minimum of 10 minutes after the initial alarm) it will send the all-clear signal ( THREE 5-second blasts of the horn and the strobe light will stop flashing). If activities cannot resume after a 45 minute delay, the activity will be officially postponed or cancelled.**

## **Emergency Action Plan for Tornadoes**

- Although somewhat rare, tornado conditions are characteristic in this part of Ohio. As a result, the City of Vandalia has an outdoor weather warning system in place. The sirens for this system are located in strategic outdoor venues including the Vandalia Sports Complex, Cassel Hills Golf Course and Lichtenfels Park.

***Tornado Warning*** – In the event of a “Tornado Warning” issued by the National Weather Service for the Northern Montgomery County area, City of Vandalia public safety personnel will activate the outdoor weather warning system. This will indicate that all coaches, participants and spectators must immediately evacuate the athletic venue and seek safe shelter.

***Tornado Safe Shelter*** – While no place is absolutely safe from a tornado threat, some places are safer than others. When activity has been suspended due to the activation of the weather warning (siren) participants must evacuate the athletic field area to the following suggested safe shelter:

1. **Vandalia Recreation Center** – The locker rooms at the VRC are designated tornado safe spots.

The Vandalia Parks and Recreation Department, to the best of its ability, wants to ensure the safety of each participant, coach, parent and spectator. Adults must take responsibility for the safety of children in their care during severe weather activity. Warnings and this Emergency Action Plan must be observed.