



Rio Rapids Soccer Club Lightning Policy

- ❖ Obtain a weather report each day before your practice or event to determine if severe weather is expected in the area.
- ❖ Know where the closest "safe structure or location" is to the field or playing area, and know how long it takes to get to the safe structure or location, defined as:
 - Any fully enclosed building with plumbing and electricity that is normally occupied or frequently used by people.
 - In the absence of a building, any vehicle with a hard metal roof, closed doors and rolled up windows.

❖ Be aware of how close lightning is occurring. There are two ways to identify when to leave the playing area and seek a safe structure or location:

- 1) *Preferred*- Use WeatherBug, a free smartphone app, and activate Spark. Seek shelter as soon as Spark indicates a lightning strike within a 7-mile radius of your location.
- 2) *If a smartphone is unavailable*- Count the seconds from the time the lightning is sighted to when the clap of thunder is heard. By the time you have a flash-to-bang count of 35 seconds, everyone should seek shelter.

❖ Determining when it is safe to return to the field:

- 1) *Preferred*- Use WeatherBug, a free smartphone app, and activate Spark. You may return to the fields when Spark indicates no lightning strike has occurred within 6 miles of your location and no thunder has been heard in the last 30 minutes.
- 2) *If a smartphone is unavailable*- You may return to the fields when 30 minutes has passed since the last thunder heard or lightning bolt seen in the vicinity.

❖ 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.

❖ 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. Do not lie flat! The following are unsafe and should be avoided: the tallest trees or objects (such as light poles or flag poles), metal objects (such as fences or bleachers, picnic shelters or pavilions), tents, individual trees, standing pools of water, and open fields.

❖ A person who feels his or her hair stand on end, or skin tingle, should immediately crouch, as explained above.

❖ Please keep in mind: people who have been struck by lightning do not carry an electrical charge, therefore, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is safe for the responder.

These recommendations are based on the NATA Position Statement: Lightning Safety for Athletics and Recreation. Rio Rapids SC suggests you familiarize yourself with the entire position statement: <http://www.natajournals.org/doi/pdf/10.4085/1062-6050-48.2.25>