

Bellaire Little League

THREATENING WEATHER POLICY

According to the NOAA -National Weather Service lightning hits ball fields during little league and soccer games every year. Many games are not called until the rain begins, and yet it is not the rain that is dangerous. Ball fields provide a lot of potential lightning targets such as poles, metal fences, and metal bleachers. The fields themselves are wide open areas where players are often the tallest objects around.

Believe it or not, lightning kills an average of 85 and injures 250 people each year across the nation. This number may not seem high, yet when you look at the individual cases, most could have been prevented. The basic rule of thumb is "If you can hear thunder, you are close enough to the storm to be struck!" Thunderstorms extend 5 to 10 miles into the atmosphere. Winds aloft can blow the upper portion (anvil) of the storm many miles downstream. Lightning can come out of the side or "anvil" of the storm striking the ground 10 to 15 miles away from the rain portion of the cloud.

Threatening Weather Safety/Evacuation Procedures

1. At the first sound of nearby thunder or any sighting of visible lightning, the game or practice must be stopped immediately:
 - o If prior to the beginning of a game, the opposing managers will make the decision whether to begin play after the storm has ended.
 - o After a game starts, the umpire-in-charge will in his/her discretion determine when/whether to suspend play and when/whether to resume play after the storm has ended. If the threatening condition(s) do not clear within a reasonable period of time, the game should be called/suspended and completed at a later date per League ground rules.
 - o If during a practice, the manager will make the decision whether to resume practice after the storm has ended.
 - o In all cases there shall be a delay of game/practice of not less than thirty (30') minutes after the last visual sighting of lightning or hearing thunder.
2. Seek shelter in a non-metal building or a fully enclosed vehicle with the windows completely shut and wait for a decision on whether to continue the game or practice.
3. Stay away from metal objects such as fencing and metal bats. Avoid high ground and open spaces. Avoid the dugouts - they are not safe from lightning. Avoid going underneath trees. Trees "attract" lightning.
4. If no shelter is available and lightning is striking nearby, you should:
 - o Avoid direct contact with other people.
 - o Remove all metal objects from your person.
 - o Crouch down, with feet together and hands on knees.
5. If a nearby person is injured from lightning, give first aid procedures if you are qualified to do so. An injured person does not carry an electrical charge and can be handled safely. Send for help immediately.