

CP025 - Lightning Safety Plan

Scope

These guidelines apply to all Clerc Center employees, contract staff, and temporary staff.

Guidelines

Lightning is the most under recognized weather hazard. Lightning kills more people than tornadoes or hurricanes. Yet, lightning deaths or injuries can be easily, quickly, and inexpensively avoided. Essentially, if lightning is in the area, people should be inside where it's safe. Fundamentally, no place outside is safe with thunderstorms within six miles. The biggest concern and source of resistance is inconvenience; however, being inconvenienced is a small price to pay for keeping students and others safe.

Four Levels of Lightning Safety

1. Check forecasts and either schedule outdoor activities at times to avoid lightning or move activities indoors.
2. Seek shelter if lightning is 6 miles away or less.
 - a. Shelter in a proper building in a fully enclosed building with wiring and plumbing, like a school building.
 - i. Stay away from windows, doorways, electrical appliances, lighting and electrical sockets, plumbing, corded telephones.
 - ii. If a proper building isn't available, seek shelter in a vehicle with a solid metal roof and sides, like a school bus or car.
 - b. Determine how far away a storm is:
 - i. Sound of thunder and vision of lightning recognized by anyone.
 - ii. Use a lightning alert app. Seek shelter if it indicates that lightning is within 6 miles of your location.
 1. Download the WxSentry app (See supervisor for username and password)
 2. National Weather Service (NWS) website [www.weather.gov]
 3. Online thunderstorm and severe weather forecasts [www.spc.noaa.gov]
 - iii. Follow the instructions of school officials, MessageNet alerts, and/or sports trainer.
 - c. Wait for 30 minutes after the last lightning strike before going outside.
 - i. For every subsequent lightning strike, reset the 30 minute timer.
 - ii. The time indoors may feel inconvenient after the storm, but is vitally important.
 - iii. Most lightning strike deaths and injuries occur after the storm has passed or dissipated.

- iv. In the case that supervising school leader is unable to effectively utilize the sound of thunder roaring, he/she may not resume activity until the sight of lightning flashes are no longer present.
 - v. While every effort should be made to stay indoors until the all clear is issued, there may be times when a storm lasts for many hours and students need to move between buildings. In these cases, discretion will be given to the Principal/DSL to allow students to cross between buildings or to arrange transport via vans.
3. Avoid dangerous locations
- a. Avoid elevated locations, like mountains or elevated locations, like playground structures.
 - b. Avoid open areas, like sports fields or beaches.
 - c. Avoid tall isolated objects, like flagpoles.
 - d. Avoid water activities or large bodies of water, including swimming pools
 - e. Do not shelter under trees to keep dry in thunderstorms.
 - f. Don't seek shelter in open buildings, like pavilions, rain shelters, or bus stops.
 - g. Avoid long metal structures, like bleachers or fences.
 - h. Locker rooms, showers, and restrooms are not considered as an evacuation place.
 - i. No one should use showers, sinks, indoor pools, appliances, landline phones, or electronics.
 - j. Do not lie on concrete floors or lean against concrete walls.
4. First Aid
- a. All deaths from lightning are from cardiac arrest or stopped breathing from the cardiac arrest.
 - b. Start CPR or rescue breathing if the person has no pulse or no breathing, respectively.
 - c. Have someone call 9-1-1 for professional medical care.
 - d. Use an AED, if one is available.
 - i. Initiate or continue CPR if the AED won't shock.
 - ii. AEDs only work if the cardiac arrest is a ventricular fibrillation, but not all lightning cardiac arrests are this type.

The Clerc Center will:

- Monitor thunderstorm and lightning strike reports within the advisory (15 miles), caution (10 miles), and warning (6 miles) bands.
- Lightning within 10 miles or less:
 - Whenever possible, A&O will send an email Clerc Center essential staff a "caution" message if lightning is within 10 miles.
 - Essential staff should notify any activity leaders about the caution.
 - Essential staff should, in turn, warn any teachers or staff who may be engaging in outdoor activities with students.
- Lightning within 6 miles, or less:
 - Whenever possible, A&O will send activate a "Purple: Outdoor activities are suspended" message to the Clerc Center community, via MessageNet.
 - Clerc Center employees and students should seek shelter immediately.

- Wait inside until an all-clear message is sent via MessageNet.
- All clear criteria:
 - 30 minutes since the last thunder/lightning within the 6-mile range.
 - Forecast map does not indicate imminent new lightning strikes after a review of:
 - Forecast
 - Storm intensity and size
 - Storm path
 - Presence of significant lightning within caution (6-15 miles) and advisory (11-30 miles) bands.

Teachers and staff supervising outdoor activities should:

- Check weather reports.
- Download and monitor a lightning alert app
 - WxSentry (See supervisor for username and password)
- Create contingency plans/activities if activity participants need to seek shelter inside.
- Heed “Purple: Outdoor activities are suspended” warnings sent via MessageNet, and seek shelter immediately if notified to do so.
- In the absence of a MessageNet announcement, follow the four levels of lightning safety.

Related Policy, Guidelines, Procedure, and/or Form

Guidelines

CP001 – Emergency Procedures Guide,

<http://www.gallaudet.edu/documents/clerc/handbook/CP001-EmergencyProceduresGuide.pdf>

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