

Iola Recreation

Weather Policies

Lightning and Outdoor Events

In the case of inclement weather, all outdoor events hosted by the City of Iola Recreation Department will follow the guidelines for safety that have been recommended by the National Lightning Safety Institute. These recommendations for lightning safety are:

Lightning Safety for Organized Outdoor Athletic Events

Practice and training increase recreation performance. Similarly, preparedness can reduce the risk of the lightning hazard. Lightning is the most frequent weather hazard impacting athletics events. Baseball, football, lacrosse, skiing, swimming, soccer, tennis, track and field events...all these and other outdoor sports have been visited by lightning.

Education is the single most important means to achieve lightning safety. A lightning safety program should be implemented at every facility. The following steps are suggested:

1. A responsible person should be designated to monitor weather conditions. Local weather forecasts - from The Weather Channel, NOAA Weather Radio, or local TV stations - should be observed 24 hours prior to athletic events. An inexpensive portable weather radio is recommended for obtaining timely storm data.
2. Suspension and resumption of athletic activities should be planned in advance. Understanding of SAFE shelters is essential. SAFE evacuation sites include:
 - a. Fully enclosed metal vehicles with windows up.
 - b. Substantial buildings.
 - c. The low ground. Seek cover in clumps of bushes.
3. UNSAFE SHELTER AREAS include all outdoor metal objects like flag poles, fences and gates, high mast light poles, metal bleachers, golf cars, machinery, etc. AVOID trees. AVOID water. AVOID open fields. AVOID the high ground.
4. Lightning's distance from you is easy to calculate: if you hear thunder, it and the associated lightning are within auditory range...about 6-8 miles away. The distance from Strike A to Strike B also can be 6-8 miles. Ask yourself why you should NOT go to shelter immediately. Of course, different distances to shelter will determine different times to suspend activities. A good lightning safety motto is: "If you can see it (lightning) flee it; if you can hear it (thunder), clear it."

5. If you feel your hair standing on end, and/or hear "crackling noises" - you are in lightning's electric field. If caught outside during close-in lightning, immediately remove metal objects (including baseball cap), place your feet together, duck your head, and crouch down low in baseball catcher's stance with hands on knees.

6. Wait a minimum of 30 minutes from the last observed lightning or thunder before resuming activities.

7. People who have been struck by lightning do not carry an electrical charge and are safe to handle. Apply first aid immediately if you are qualified to do so. Get emergency help promptly.

If an outdoor event has already started and it is interrupted by dangerous weather, the Iola Recreation department will hold to the safety guidelines established by the National Lightning Safety Institute. These guidelines have been published in NLSI's *Updated Recommendations for Lightning Safety – 2002* and are as follows:

If you are planning to be outdoors, identify and stay within travelling range of a proper shelter. Employ the "30-30 Rule" to know when to seek a safer location. The "30-30 Rule" states that when you see lightning, count the time until you hear thunder. If this time is 30 seconds or less, go immediately to a safer place. If you can't see lightning, just hearing the thunder means lightning is likely within striking range. After the storm has apparently dissipated or moved on, wait 30 minutes or more after hearing the last thunder before leaving the safer location.

Please note that any time a coach wants to pull his/her team from the field or a parent his/her child from the field, due to inclement weather, Iola Recreation will not prevent them from doing so and there will be no action taken against that coach or parent.

Teach this safety slogan:

"If you can see it, flee it; if you can hear it, clear it."

Please reprint & distribute.

Prepared by the

National Lightning Safety Institute, Louisville, CO.

Iola Recreation

Weather Policies

Lightning and Swimming Pool Safety

The Iola Municipal Swimming Pool will follow the National Lightning Safety Institute's guidelines for lightning and swimming pool safety. The guidelines are:

Indoor/Outdoor Swimming Pool Safety

Lightning's behavior is random and unpredictable. We recommend a very conservative attitude towards it. Preparedness and quick responses are the best defenses towards the lightning hazard.

Swimming pools are connected to a much larger surface area via underground water pipes, gas lines, electric and telephone wiring, etc. Lightning strikes to the ground anywhere on this metallic network may induce shocks elsewhere.

The National Lightning Safety Institute recommends the following swimming pool safety procedures:

1. Designate a responsible person as the weather safety lookout. That person should keep an eye on the weather. Use a "weather radio" or the Weather Channel or other TV program to obtain good localized advanced weather information.
2. When thunder and/or lightning are first noticed, use the Flash-To-Bang (F-B) method to determine its' rough distance and speed. This technique measures the time from seeing lightning to hearing associated thunder. For each five seconds from F-B, lightning is one mile away. Thus, a F-B of 10 = 2 miles; 15 = 3 miles; 20 = 4 miles; etc. **At a F-B count of thirty, the pool should be evacuated. People should be directed to safe shelter nearby.**
3. **Pool activities should remain suspended until thirty minutes after the last thunder is heard.** The distance from Strike A to Strike B to Strike C can be some 5-8 miles away. And it can strike much farther away. Why take a chance with lightning?

Teach this safety slogan:

"If you can see it, flee it; if you can hear it, clear it."

Please reprint & distribute.

Prepared by the
National Lightning Safety Institute, Louisville, CO.

Iola Recreation

Weather Policies

Extreme Heat Safety

The City of Iola Recreation Department has implemented the following guidelines to deal with extreme heat at all youth baseball/softball games. It is designed to provide participants with a standard for safe play in situations of extreme heat.

The two values that Iola Recreation will take into account when modifying or canceling games, are air temperature and relative humidity. The combination of these two elements reflects the heat index. We will rely on the heat index reading that is consistently updated at the Jefferson Elementary School reporting station.

Iola Recreation recognizes five heat index zones. **These zones are based on recommended guidelines published by the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) for participation in sports activities during periods of extreme heat.** Because the heat index does not take into account wind and direct sunlight, two degrees will be added to the stated heat index on sunny and still days. Likewise, two degrees will be subtracted on cloudy and windy days.

Yellow Zone

Heat index of 65-80 degrees. In this range, coaches will be encouraged to take extra steps to protect their players by making sure they keep them hydrated and by encouraging frequent substitution during games and practices.

Orange Zone

Heat index of 81-98 degrees. In this range, Iola Recreation will implement the following at games: all measures taken in the Yellow Zone; water coolers will be available at each field complex for players/parents/fans. If it is a practice day, coaches are instructed to keep players well hydrated and to take frequent breaks.

Red Zone

Heat index ranging of 99 to 105 degrees. In this range, Iola Recreation will implement the following for games: all measures taken in the Yellow and Orange Zones; the length of games will be modified according to the schedule below.

- T-ball, Pixie, and Bitty Ball – games will be reduced to a 45 minute time limit.
- Pigtail and Pee Wee – games will be reduced to a one hour time limit.
- Ponytail and Little League – games will be reduced to a one hour and 15 minute time limit.
- Boys USSSA – games will be reduced to a one hour and 30 minute time limit.

If it is a practice day, coaches are instructed to reduce the time of practice, take frequent breaks and keep players well hydrated by having them drink water.

Black Zone

Heat index above 106. In this range, Iola Recreation will cancel all games **until the heat index returns to 105 or below**. Notification will be given to the head coach of each participating team.

Note – The Iola Recreation Department will check the heat index on the website (www.accuweather.com) at 5:00 p.m. before each game. We will inform the coaches and umpires as to what zone the games will be played at that current evening. This zone will be in place for the rest of the evening and will not change as the evening goes on.

The above are merely guidelines and it is the responsibility of parents to make the ultimate decision as to the participation of their child in Iola Recreation events when heat may be a factor, taking into consideration the age and physical condition of their child. Parents also have the ultimate responsibility to inform their child about the dangers of heat and need for protection, including sunscreen, proper hydration, and acclimatization.