



## Lightning Safety Plan

Thunderstorms threaten the Snoqualmie Valley frequently throughout the football season, August through November, and can pose serious risk to those in the storm area. WCJFA has developed this Lightning Safety Plan in accordance with the GEJFA and recommendations from the National Weather Service ([NWS](#)) and [NOAA](#) to provide guidance to Wildcats coaches, parents, and players in the event of a thunderstorm.

### Lightning awareness

- Lightning strikes occur approximately 40-50 times a second, or nearly 1.4 billion times a year. ([Wikipedia](#))
- Approximately 25 million lightning strikes hit the ground in the United States every year. ([NOAA](#))
- Lightning kills an average of 49 people in the United States each year, and hundreds more are severely injured. ([NOAA](#))
- Lightning is the second highest cause of weather-related deaths in the United States annually. ([NWA](#))

### Lightning safety

From [NOAA](#):

- When thunderstorms are in the area, there is *no safe place* outdoors.
- Lightning can strike up to 10 miles from a storm.
- Lightning can strike from blue sky and in the absence of rain. At least ten percent of lightning occurs when there is no rainfall and when blue sky is visible; this is especially prevalent with summer thunderstorms.
- If you hear thunder, lightning is close enough to strike you.
- When you hear thunder, immediately move to safe shelter. Remain sheltered for at least 30 minutes after you hear the last rumble of thunder.
- If you cannot find shelter:
  - Seek a thick grove of small trees or bushes surrounded by a dry ditch. Never shelter under an isolated tree.
  - Stay away from lakes, ponds, and other bodies of water.
  - Stay away from objects that conduct electricity (uncovered bleachers, standing pools of water, barbed wire fences, power lines, metal structures, and so on).
  - Get low. Crouch down with legs together, weight on the balls of your feet, arms wrapped around knees, and head down with ears covered. Never lie flat on the ground.

## Estimating distance from a storm

To estimate distance from a storm, use the flash-to-bang method: After you see lightning, count the number of seconds until you hear thunder. To obtain the distance in miles, divide the number of seconds by five.

For example, if you see lightning and it takes 10 seconds before you hear thunder, then the storm is 2 miles away.

## Wildcats lightning safety plan – Practices at Centennial Fields

During football practice, lightning safety is monitored by coaches. All coaches share responsibility in strictly following lightning safety measures. Coaches who violate the lightning safety plan may be suspended for part or all of the remaining season.

1. Upon hearing thunder for the first time, coaches should begin to monitor the weather closely and plan to put lightning safety measures into effect.
2. If either thunder or lightning is detected within 30 minutes after the initial sound of thunder, coaches must cancel practice.

Because Centennial Fields offers limited shelter from lightning, the goal should be to leave the venue immediately. Those who cannot leave immediately should seek shelter in one of these areas: beneath the pavilion, bathrooms, or beneath a cluster of trees.

3. Coaches ensure that all players can get home safely. At least one coach must remain at the venue until all players have been picked up. Do not allow players to walk home; offer rides after getting permission from parents.

## Wildcats lightning safety plan – Games at Mt Si Stadium

When WCJFA hosts games, lightning safety is monitored by the football officials and the WCJFA field manager.

The covered bleachers at Mt Si Stadium are considered reasonably safe because the bleachers are covered and grounded.

1. Upon hearing thunder for the first time:
  - a. On-field officials inform both the home and visiting teams that a thunderstorm warning is in effect, and gameplay resumes.
  - b. Wildcats coaches relay the information to the booth.
  - c. Announcers broadcast the news to everyone in the stadium.
2. If either thunder or lightning is detected within 30 minutes after the initial sound of thunder:
  - a. Officials suspend gameplay and notify the teams that the lightning safety plan is in effect. Gameplay is suspended for a minimum of 30 minutes.

- b. Coaches immediately take their teams to shelter.
  - c. The field manager relays the information to the booth.
  - d. Announcers broadcast the news and recommend that fans seek shelter.
3. If no thunder or lightning is detected within the next 30 minutes, gameplay resumes.
4. If either thunder or lightning is detected within 30 minutes:
  - a. The 30-minute return-to-play clock is reset. Gameplay will not resume until either thunder and lightning is not present in the area for at least 30 consecutive minutes and the storm is moving away from the venue.
  - b. The field manager and staff in the booth monitor weather conditions closely and consult local Doppler radar (offered by [KING5.com](http://KING5.com) and others) if possible.
5. If the thunderstorm persists and does not leave the area within a reasonable period of time, or if Doppler radar shows that the storm is unlikely to subside, the field manager may cancel the current game and future games as necessary. The field manager notifies WCJFA board members, who in turn notify GEJFA of any game cancelations.
6. Coaches ensure that all players can get home safely. At least one coach must remain at the venue until all players have been picked up. Do not allow players to walk home; offer rides after getting permission from parents.

### If someone is struck by lightning

1. Call 911.
2. If necessary, move victim carefully to a safe location. Stay away from metal, pools of water, and other things that conduct electricity.

Lightning victims are safe to touch. They do not carry a charge.

3. Evaluate airway, breathing, and circulation. Begin CPR if necessary.
4. Find and use an automatic external defibrillator (AED) if possible.

### Resources

GEJFA: [Guidelines for Lightning Safety](#)

NCAA: [Lightning Safety](#)

NOAA: [Lightning Safety](#)

National Weather Association (NWS): [Lightning Detection](#)

WHNT News: [Stadium Strikes: The risk of lightning at football games](#)