

UNC-Chapel Hill Sport Clubs Lightning Policy

Lightning is the most consistent and significant weather hazard that may affect sport clubs. The University of North Carolina subscribes to the Weather Data, Inc. Service. When there is a storm containing lightning in the vicinity of the UNC campus, the weather service pages the Sports Medicine alphanumeric pagers with specific information. If the weather becomes a concern during an event or practice and club athletes may call Stallings-Evans Sports Medicine Center (962-2067) for weather information.

In the event of lightning or severe weather in the area, **everyone should be removed from the outdoor facility when lightning is approximately 10 miles away. Games or practice may resume when the storm has moved through and the closest lightning is beyond the 10-mile radius.**

The decision to remove people from an outdoor facility during a game or tournament due to threatening weather will be made as follows:

1. Prior to the game or tournament, the athletic trainer on site will advise the games operations staff/coaches/participants about weather related issues. The games operation staff/coaches/participants have the responsibility to cancel, delay, or allow play.
2. During a game, the athletic trainer will advise the game officials about weather related issues. The game officials have the responsibility to stop, and restart, or cancel the game.
3. The athletic training staff will follow the above protocol and will not remain on the field if the weather warning is ignored. The athletic training staff can get real time information from the Weather Data Service so the on-field time can be maximized.

The decision to remove people from an outdoor facility during practice due to threatening weather will be made as follows:

1. The athletic trainer on-call will receive a page stating there is threatening weather within 10 miles of campus.
2. The athletic trainer on-call will send out a weather warning and advise of field clearance via text message through the free RAVE system.
3. All fields must be cleared at time text message is received.
4. Campus Recreation will go to all practice sites to ensure fields have been cleared.
5. Club participants may call Stallings-Evans or the athletic trainer on call about when it is safe to restart practice.

If the team is removed from the field, everyone should go to the closest safe structure and remain there until given an all clear by the athletic trainer. The following safe structures have been identified for each facility:

<u>SITE</u>	<u>SAFE STRUCTURES</u>
1. Navy Field	Vehicles
2. Ehringhouse Field	Vehicles
3. Hooker Fields	Carmichael Gym or Vehicles

Procedure for joining the free on-campus RAVE system:

1. Sign up at this website (onyen and password required)
<https://www.getrave.com/login/UNC>
2. Search for the group titled: Sport Clubs - Weather Alerts and join that group
3. Click under the tab titled Alerts: make sure the Sport Clubs - Weather Alerts group is checked YES for via text message and via preferred email.
4. PLEASE MAKE SURE OF STEP 3!! THE TEXT MESSAGE BOX MUST BE CHECKED YES for the Sport Clubs - Weather Alert Group, for this system to work.

For off-campus sites:

Sport club participants should be familiar with the flash-to-bang method of estimating how far away lightning is occurring. Thunder always accompanies lightning, even though its audible range can be diminished due to background noise in the immediate environment and its distance from the observer. To use the flash-to-bang method, count the seconds from the time the lightning is sighted to when the clap of thunder is heard. Divide this number by 5 to obtain how far away (in miles) the lightning is occurring. For example, if an individual counts 15 seconds between seeing the flash and hearing the bang, 15 divided by 5 equals 3; therefore the lightning is approximately 3 miles away.

As a minimum, the National Severe Storms Laboratory (NSSL) strongly recommends that by the time the flash-to-bang count reaches 30 seconds, all individuals should have left the athletic site and reached a safe structure or location.

According to the NCAA Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports, if individuals are unable to reach a safe structure, 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. Minimize contact with the ground, because lightning current often enters a victim through the ground rather than by a direct overhead strike. Minimize your body's surface area and minimize contact with the ground.

DO NOT LIE FLAT! Stay away from the tallest trees or objects (such as light poles or flag poles), individual trees, standing pools of water, and open fields. Avoid being the highest object in a field. **Do not take shelter under a single, tall tree.**

If one does not have access to the weather data service, the NSSL staff recommends that everyone should ideally wait at least 30 minutes after the last flash of lightning or sound of thunder before returning to the field or activity.