

AACPS Lightning Safety Protocols

AACPS is committed to the health and safety of our students and staff. We use updated technology to detect real time lightning through Earth Networks' Outdoor Alerting System (OAS). The OAS is powered by Earth Networks' Total Lightning Network, which is capable of detecting both in-cloud and cloud-to-ground lightning. AACPS has lightning detection systems on each of our comprehensive high schools. All systems will utilize county established on/off activation times/settings.

- The systems will be "on" from 7 am to 10 pm, 7 days a week.
- When lightning is detected in an 8-mile radius of the school, a horn sounds for 15 seconds alerting all people in the area to seek shelter. At the same time, a strobe light will be activated on the detection system that will remain in effect for the entire at-risk time frame.
- Administrators, athletic directors, athletic trainers, active coaches, and others in the alert system or who have the app will be notified immediately via text and/or email of the lightning detection on their phones and/or computers.
- All coaches, athletic trainers, advisors of extracurricular activities, and administrators present will immediately suspend all outdoor activities and instruct all people in the vicinity to seek shelter.
- No AACPS personnel shall ignore, disregard, or delay in clearing the outside area immediately upon lightning detection.
- Any coach, advisor, or administrator may evacuate an outside area during a practice or warm-up period whenever they declare it unsafe and may lead all participants to the nearest shelter.
- Under NFHS and MPSSAA rules, officials have control of an athletic contest once it begins and may discontinue or delay a contest whenever they declare a health and safety hazard. AACPS officials' associations are directed to evacuate immediately and seek shelter when the alarm sounds.
- Once lightning has not been detected by the system in the area for 30 minutes, there will be three, 5-second horn alerts, along with an all-clear signal to administrators' and coaches'/advisors' participating phones and computers, notifying safety to return to the outdoor area.
- In situations where multiple alarms sound, play should resume within 1 hour after the initial suspension of the event. Otherwise, the event may be concluded/postponed in accordance with sports-specific rulebooks.
- If play resumes and is suspended for a second time, school personnel may opt to not wait the thirty minutes and conclude/postpone the event at that point. Events will not start or restart after 9 pm (exceptions may be agreed to by both schools in special circumstances).
- Each school's athletics/facilities staff at the school will do a live test prior to the start of each season.
- In the event the Earth Networks system at a site isn't working properly, staff will work together to use our previous model of implementing 30-min delays and safety plans when lightning or thunder is heard or seen.