

## ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE



Chesterfield County

Department of Parks  
and Recreation

Division	Subject	Approved By
Recreation	Thunderstorm and Lightning Procedure	<i>James J. Brown</i>
		Last Updated: 2/13/18

To provide guidance to Parks and Recreation personnel regarding the monitoring of weather conditions, pre-planning and taking actions to minimize lightning related safety risks at supervised outdoor facilities.

These procedures are based on guidance from the Risk Management Department and are intended to be used at supervised outdoor recreational facilities.

- When the entire facility is rented for an event, the group/organization's severe weather plan will take precedence over these procedures. If the organization does not have a severe weather plan, this procedure will then be enforced.
- Facility Staff will determine how close the lightning is by practicing the flash-to-bang method for measuring of lightning distance as it approaches. Using this method, one counts the seconds from seeing the lightning flash to hearing the thunder. For each 5-second count, lightning is approximately 1 mile away. (Example: at 25 seconds, the strike is 5 miles away.) If lightning can be seen, there is a potential risk and shelter should be taken.
- Patrons will be properly informed when a thunderstorm watch is in effect and what procedures will be followed during this time to include: play may be suspended, what the "clear the area" signal will be, where to seek shelter, and what routes to take as they evacuate the area.
- One staff person will be responsible for monitoring weather forecasts, watching for developing weather conditions, and timing the flash-to-bang intervals at the first sound of thunder. Weather radios will be used where facilities allow.
- Upon detection of a storm, by crash of thunder or bolt of lightning, facility staff will sound 1 long blast (at least 3 seconds) of an air horn to clear fields.
- Patrons will be expected to leave the fields and seek shelter for at least 30 minutes.
- Each occurrence of thunder and/or lightning will restart the 30 minute wait.
- When the appropriate time has passed, staff will sound 2 short air horn blasts (less than 1 second each) opening the fields for play once again.