



Weather Policy

1. RECORD OF REVISIONS

- **Effective Date:** June 2026
- **Review Cycle:** Annual (Prior to the start of the May–July season)
- **Key Updates:** Integrated WIAA/NWS 30-minute lighting guidelines, established a strict 30-minute maximum wait cap for back-to-back scheduling, designated block storage structures for staff safety, and formalized a 4:00 PM pre-game decision deadline. Established heat advisory procedures.

2. PURPOSE & BACKGROUND

To establish a clear, standardized operational workflow and safety protocol for handling inclement weather during the outdoor youth baseball season. Because this program operates from May through July—coinciding with Wisconsin’s peak severe storm season—and utilizes a compact 5:00 PM – 8:00 PM evening schedule, structured guidelines are required to manage weather threats objectively.

While the program emphasizes maximizing safe recreational play, physical safety is the absolute priority. This policy removes guesswork for field staff, manages expectations for families, and ensures compliance with the **Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association (WIAA)** and **National Weather Service (NWS)** lightning safety standards.

3. THE SCIENCE OF LIGHTNING SAFETY (EDUCATIONAL OUTLINE)

To ensure all staff, coaches, and families understand the risk profiles associated with youth baseball infrastructure, the following educational facts underpin this policy:

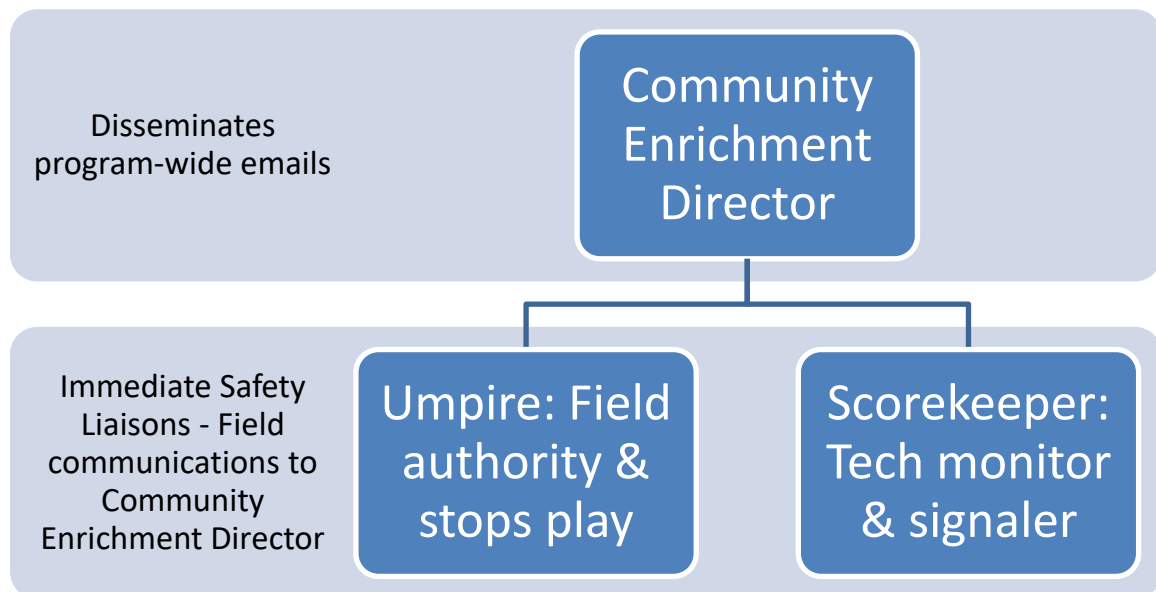
- **The 30/30 Rule:** If thunder is heard within 30 seconds of a lightning flash, the storm is within 6 miles and danger is immediate. A standard 30-minute freeze must be placed on all outdoor activities.
- **The Conductivity Hazard:** Metal bats, helmets, chain-link backstops, and metal bleachers **do not attract** lightning. However, they are highly efficient **conductors** of electricity. A nearby ground strike can travel instantly through metal player benches or fencing, causing catastrophic secondary currents to anyone in contact with them.
- **The "Bolt from the Blue" Phenomenon:** Lightning routinely strikes up to 10–15 miles away from the core of a storm, well outside of the active rain shaft. The absence of rain does not equal safety. If thunder is audible, lightning is close enough to strike the playing field.

4. TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION & MONITORING PROTOCOLS

To maintain situational awareness without relying on human visibility alone, field staff must leverage real-time radar and lightning detection applications.

- **Authorized Tracking Applications:** On-site staff must maintain an active, location-enabled weather application equipped with automated lightning proximity alerts (e.g., *WeatherBug* with Spark alerts, *My Lightning Tracker*, or a verified local radar feed).
- **Proximity Threshold:** The critical safety perimeter is **10 miles**. Any cloud-to-ground lightning strike registered within a 10-mile radius of the park requires an immediate game stoppage.
- **Pre-Game Evaluation:** Beginning no later than 3:00 PM, the Community Enrichment Director will track regional NWS radar loops, active convective outlooks, and localized storm cells.

5. CHAIN OF COMMAND: ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES



A. Scorekeeper (On-Site Weather Monitor)

- Serves as the primary tech monitor on the field.
- Maintains cell phone power (utilizing the block storage room outlets if necessary) to monitor the tracking app.
- Triggers the emergency air horn/whistle evacuation signals.
- Initiates direct communication with the Community Enrichment Director in the event of an on-site delay.

B. Umpire (Field Authority)

- Holds final, absolute authority over active gameplay.
- Upon notification from the Scorekeeper, personal observation of lightning/thunder, or hearing the evacuation horn, the Umpire must instantly halt play, call "Time," and order the immediate clearance of the field and dugouts.

C. Volunteer Coaches

- Responsible for the immediate accountability and movement of their respective players.
- Must ensure all team metal bats are left behind in gear bags or dugouts to prevent lightning conduction hazards during evacuation.
- Must guide players directly to their respective parents or guardians.

D. Spectators & Players

- Must completely clear the metal bleachers and backstop areas immediately upon hearing an evacuation signal.
- Must follow shelter directions without lingering to pack up non-essential personal gear.

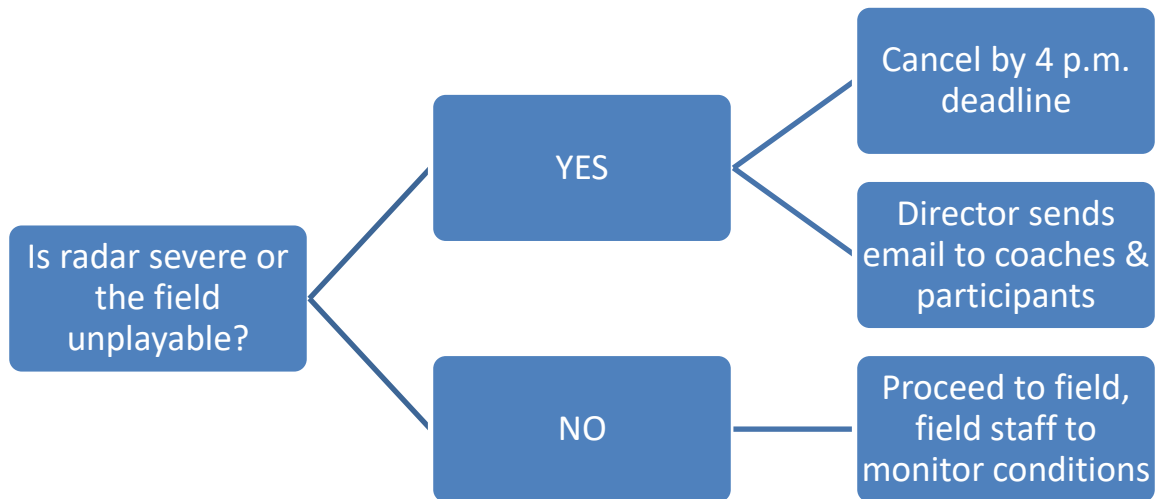
6. EVACUATION & SHELTER-IN-PLACE MAPPING

Because open-air dugouts, open-air wooden scorekeeper booths, and small park picnic shelters **do not** offer structural protection against lightning strikes or high winds, they are strictly prohibited during a weather event. The park's block restroom and storage structures have low square-footage capacities and cannot fit an entire evening's crowd. Sheltering must be executed as follows:

Demographic	Primary Safe Shelter	Secondary Emergency Option
Spectators & Players	Enclosed, hard-top metal vehicles with windows rolled up completely.	<i>None.</i> Must utilize personal vehicles.
Walk-Ins / Non-Vehicular Attendees	Proceed directly to the concrete block restroom facilities.	Overcrowd into restrooms as safely as possible.
On-Field Staff (Umpire & Scorekeeper)	Proceed directly to the concrete block storage room.	Secure equipment, lock the door from the inside, and monitor alerts.

7. SEVERE WEATHER ACTION MATRICES

PHASE I: PRE-GAME OPERATIONS (BEFORE 5:00 PM)



- **The 4:00 PM Decision Point:** If regional NWS radar indicates an inescapable storm system tracking directly toward the park, or if substantial rainfall earlier in the day has rendered the infield unsafe for game play, a cancellation determination will be made **no later than 4:00 PM**.
- **The "Iffy" Clause:** If convective cells are scattered and radar suggests a high probability that storms may split or miss the park completely, games will proceed as scheduled. On-site staff will assume live monitoring duties upon arrival.
- **Notification Flow:** Pre-game cancellations are handled exclusively at the administrative level. The Community Enrichment Director will issue a mass email to all registered coaches, families, and scheduled game staff by 4:00 PM so that participants do not leave their homes.

PHASE II: MID-GAME OPERATIONS (5:00 PM – 8:00 PM)

SIGNAL TO EVACUATE: Three (3) Long Blasts of an Air Horn or Whistle

Lightening with 10 miles of the field is detected OR thunder is heard

- 3 long horn or whistle blasts

Playing field is cleared immediately

- Staff contact the director

30-minute wait clock begins

- New lightning/thunder within 30 minutes - game canceled immediately
- 30 minutes pass with no further strikes - two short horn or whistle blasts to indicate playing may resume

Scenario A: Lightning Enters the 10-Mile Radius or Thunder is Heard

1. **Immediate Stoppage:** The Scorekeeper sounds **three long blasts** on the air horn/whistle. The Umpire instantly freezes play and commands both teams to clear the field.
2. **Orderly Evacuation:** Coaches move players to their parents' vehicles. Staff secure high-value electronics and retreat into the concrete block storage room.
3. **Administrative Link:** The Scorekeeper immediately calls or texts the Community Enrichment Director to report the field freeze. The Director will draft and dispatch an urgent email blast to all affected divisional parents notifying them of an active on-site delay or cancellation.
4. **The Strict 30-Minute Maximum Wait Cap:** The 30-minute safety clock begins. Because youth divisions are scheduled back-to-back, **there is zero flexibility for prolonged delays.**
 - *If a subsequent lightning strike or clap of thunder occurs at any point during the initial 30-minute window, the game is officially canceled. The clock **does not** reset for a second 30-minute cycle.*
 - *If the initial 30 minutes expire with zero lightning detections inside 10 miles and zero audible thunder, play may resume.*
5. **All-Clear Signal:** To recall teams from their vehicles, the Scorekeeper will sound **two short blasts** of the air horn/whistle.

Scenario B: Sudden Tornado Warning or Severe Straight-Line Winds

If an active NWS Tornado Warning is issued for the immediate municipal area or a funnel cloud is visually identified:

1. **Immediate Threat Signal: Continuous, uninterrupted short blasts** of the air horn or whistle.
2. **Absolute Field Evacuation:** All play terminates instantly. No attempt should be made to retrieve bats, helmets, or catching gear from the dugouts.
3. **Emergency Shelter Positioning:**
 - All participants, coaches, and spectators who have keys to a vehicle must immediately enter their cars and depart the park area away from the storm's path, or lie low inside their vehicles if driving is impossible.
 - Any pedestrian attendees, walk-ins, or individuals separated from their transport must run directly to the **concrete block restroom facilities**, crowd inside, crouch down, and protect their heads.
 - Field staff must immediately shelter themselves inside the **concrete block storage room** and remain there until the NWS warning officially expires.

SECTION 8: EXTREME HEAT & HYDRATION MANAGEMENT POLICY

1. TEMPERATURE TRACKING PROTOCOL

- **Monitoring Rule:** 30 minutes prior to the first game of the evening (4:30 PM), the Scorekeeper will check the current Heat Index for the local ZIP code (54136) using the National Weather Service (NWS) or a validated local weather app.
- **Re-Check Rule:** If the Heat Index registers at or above **95°F**, the Scorekeeper must re-check the Heat Index at 6:00 PM to monitor variations during the game transitions.

2. WIAA-ALIGNED HEAT INDEX MATRIX

To keep play objective and safe, games will be modified or canceled based on four clear alert thresholds adapted from the WIAA and National High School Federation standards:

HEAT INDEX RANGE	DANGER LEVEL	REQUIRED ON-FIELD ACTIONS & MODIFICATIONS
UNDER 95°F	Green Flag <i>(Normal)</i>	* Standard play. Water must be freely accessible to all athletes. Optional 10-minute water breaks every 30 minutes.
95°F TO 99°F	Yellow Flag <i>(Caution)</i>	* Equipment Modification: Catchers must remove their helmets, chest protectors, and shin guards immediately upon returning to the dugout while their team is batting.

		* Optional 10-minute water breaks every 30 minutes. Watch players closely.
100°F TO 104°F	Red Flag <i>(High Risk)</i>	* Mandatory Rest: A mandatory 10-minute water and cooling break is enforced every 30 minutes of play (game clocks stop). * Uniform Adjustments: Players may remove team hats/helmets while in the dugout. Catchers' equipment must be stripped off when not on the field. * Consider shortening game times.
ABOVE 104°F	Black Flag <i>(Extreme Danger)</i>	* MANDATORY CANCELLATION: All outside physical activity, warm-ups, and games are immediately halted. The 4:00 PM cancellation deadline or immediate mid-game cancellation flow must be triggered.

3. MANDATORY HYDRATION BEST PRACTICES

Thirst is a late indicator of dehydration. The following practices must be enforced by volunteer coaches:

- **Pre-Hydration:** Coaches should message parents via team communications to ensure players drink **12–16 ounces of water** *before* arriving at the field.
- **Unrestricted Access:** Water breaks should never be restricted or used as a tool for discipline. Players are allowed to leave the field for water at any time during a stoppage of play.
- **The "One-for-One" Rule:** On Red/Yellow flag days, players should balance water intake with electrolyte-replacing sports drinks to avoid hyponatremia (electrolyte dilution), especially if playing back-to-back games.

4. ON-SITE COOLING TECHNIQUES (WHEN PLAYING)

When weather is in the Caution or High-Risk zones, coaches and staff must employ active cooling methods in the dugout:

- **Ice-Towel Stations:** Teams are highly encouraged to bring a team cooler filled with ice-water and small hand towels. Placing a cold, wet towel around a player's **neck, armpits, or wrists** rapidly cools the large blood vessels closer to the skin surface.
- **Dugout Sun Shields:** Kimberly Parks host covered dugouts ensuring all players are in the shade when in the dugout.
- **The Catcher's Reprieve:** Because the catcher's position requires heavy gear, umpires and coaches will allow a "courtesy runner" for the active catcher if they reach base with 2 outs. This gives the player extra time to strip off gear, sit in the shade, and hydrate before returning to the field.

5. EMERGENCY SEVERE HEAT ACTION PLAN

If a player, staff member, or spectator exhibits signs of severe heat illness (extreme dizziness, confusion, nausea, hot/dry skin, or a sudden cessation of sweating):

1. **Stop Activity:** Immediately remove the individual from the sun and move them to a shaded area or an air-conditioned vehicle.
2. **Rapid Active Cooling:** Strip off any heavy clothing or catchers' gear. Apply ice-towels aggressively to the neck, armpits, and groin. Fan the victim vigorously.
3. **Emergency Call:** If the individual is disoriented, vomits, or loses consciousness, the Scorekeeper or Coach must **call 911 immediately**—exertional heat stroke is a medical emergency. Do not attempt to force an unconscious person to drink water.