

**KNOX COUNTY  
GOVERNMENT**

***LIGHTNING SAFETY***

**Parks and  
Recreation  
Policy**

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**Purpose:**

To provide safe sports fields for the use and enjoyment of all parks and establish guidelines and procedures for inclement weather. This policy serves to inform sports field users of the hand-held Sky Scan Lightning Prediction and Warning System and describes guidelines to utilize when thunderstorms approach.

Adults must take responsibility for the safety of children in their care during thunderstorm activity. The seemingly random nature of thunderstorms cannot guarantee the individual or group absolute protection from lightning strikes. However, being aware of and following this policy can greatly reduce the risk of injury or death.

- I. Anytime lightning is visible or you hear thunder, all players, coaches, spectators and officials shall take shelter immediately.
- II. The Sky Scan hand-held lightning predictor will be in use at John Tarleton Park. This device will be monitored by the site supervisor and has three (3) degrees of lightning range, which the unit will flash when lightning is detected. The first range is 10-20 miles, the second range is 5-9 miles and the third range is 0-4 miles. When detection for the third range is picked up an audible alarm is provided. As soon as the audible alarm is sounded all activities shall cease and all people shall seek safe and appropriate shelter immediately.

- III. The Site and/or Event Supervisor shall instruct all players, coaches, spectators and officials that a danger is present and they shall seek safe shelter immediately. While no place is absolutely safe from lightning threat, some places are safer than others. Large enclosed structures tend to be much safer than smaller or open structures. In general, fully enclosed metal vehicles such as trucks, cars and vans with windows rolled up provide good shelter from lightning. Avoid contact with metal or conducting surfaces outside or inside vehicles. Avoid being in or near high places and open fields, isolated trees, unprotected gazebos, picnic shelters, baseball dugouts, communication towers, flagpoles, bleachers, metal fences and golf carts. When inside a building avoid use of the telephone, taking a shower, washing your hands, or any contact with conductive surfaces with exposure to the outside such as metal door or window frames, electrical wiring, telephone wiring, cable TV wiring, plumbing, etc..
- IV. Wait at least thirty (30) minutes after the last lightning flash or the last sound of thunder before resuming activities.
- V. Most lightning victims can actually survive their encounter with lightning, especially with timely medical treatment. Individuals struck by lightning do not carry a charge and it is safe to touch them to render medical treatment. Follow these steps to try to save the life of a lightning victim. **First:** If anyone is struck by lightning call 911 immediately. **Response:** The first tenet of emergency care is “make no more casualties”. If the area where the victim is located is a high risk area with continuing thunderstorm, the rescuers may be facing themselves in significant danger. **Evacuation:** It is relatively unusual for victims who survive a lightning strike to have major fractures that would cause paralysis or major bleeding complications unless they have suffered a fall or been thrown a distance. As a result, in an active thunderstorm, the rescuer needs to choose whether evacuation from very high risk areas to an area of lesser risk is warranted and should not be afraid to move the victim rapidly if necessary. Rescuers are cautioned to minimize their exposure to minimize their exposure to lightning as much as possible. **Resuscitation:** If the victim is not breathing, start mouth to mouth resuscitation. If it is decided to move the victim, give a few quick breaths prior to moving them. Determine if the victim has a pulse by checking the pulse at the carotid artery or femoral artery for at least 20-30 seconds. If no pulse is detected, start cardiac compressions as well. In situations that are cold and wet, putting a protective layer between the victim and the ground may decrease the hypothermia that the victim suffers which can further complicate the resuscitation.
- VI. This policy is not intended to be all-inclusive. All park users assume all risks associated with use of parks including potential of lightning strikes or other dangers resulting from inclement weather. We make no guarantee that the Sky Scan Lightning Predictor will function as designed. Knox County Government assumes no liability to park users as a result of using this lightning detection system.

- VII.** A weather radio and the use of lightning detection data in conjunction with an action plan are prudent components of a lightning safety policy, especially when larger groups and/or longer evacuation times are involved.