

### Suburban Parochial League Cross Country Lightning Safety Guidelines

Lightning is a dangerous phenomenon. Cross Country runners and spectators are at risk when the weather is inclement. The Suburban Parochial League Cross Country ("League") has developed lightning safety guidelines to minimize the risk of injury from a lightning strike to runners, coaches, meet officials and spectators. To monitor lightning, the League will utilize both the Flash-to-Bang Method and a SkyScan Lightning/Storm Detector.

**GENERAL GUIDELINES:** A member of the League (SPL President, SPL Meet head official, or designated lightning monitor) will monitor the weather and make the decision to notify the coaches or meet officials of dangerous situations and recommend the suspension of activity in the event of lightning. The decision to suspend activity will be based on:

- ❖ Utilization of 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 five to obtain how far away, in miles, the lightning is occurring.) If it reveals lightning to be within 6 miles (a 30 second count between the flash of lightning and the bang of thunder) activity is to be suspended and everyone should seek shelter immediately.
- ❖ Advisory information provided by two subsequent readings on the SkyScan Lightning/Storm Detector in the 8-20 mile range regardless of the presence of visible lightning. (This device is portable and will be in the possession of the SPL President or designated lightning monitor).

**PRIOR TO COMPETITION:** The SPL President or his/her designee will greet the officials and coaches, explain that we have a means to monitor the lightning, and offer to notify the officials and coaches during the cross country meet if there is imminent danger from the lightning. The SPL President and meet officials will then decide whether to discontinue or delay the event.

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUSPENSION OF ACTIVITY:** Once it is determined that there is danger of a lightning strike, the SPL President or his/her designee will notify the coaches and/or meet officials and subsequently immediately remove all runners, coaches, volunteers and spectators from the course. A race may be stopped during its actual progress at the discretion of the decision makers, and meet officials and volunteers should make reasonable efforts stop any race in progress if so directed.

**EVACUATION OF THE COURSE:** Immediately following the announcement of suspension of activity all runners, coaches, officials and spectators are to evacuate to the nearest enclosed structure or their vehicles.

**OUTDOOR INSTRUCTIONS:** If no safe structure or location is within a reasonable distance, find a thick grove of small trees surrounded by taller trees, a dry ditch without water, or seek a flat area (do not choose an open area where you will be the highest object). When there, crouch down wrapping your arms around your knees and lower your head to minimize contact with the ground and wait for the storm to pass.

**REMEMBER:** An open shelter or automobile is not ideal, but will offer you some protection from a lightning strike. Do not touch any metal structures directly after a lightning strike.

**EVACUATION OF THE SPECTATORS/FANS:** During a competition, once the decision to suspend activity has been made, the SPL President or his/her designee will: a) announce via the PA system or other available means and b) activate a fog horn warning signal if available:

1. Fans are advised to immediately seek shelter in the nearest enclosed shelter or vehicles
2. **REMEMBER:** open-sided shelters or tents may not protect you from a lightning strike so these are not adequate shelters.

**RESUMPTION OF ACTIVITY:** Activity may resume under the following conditions. This decision will be based on:

- ❖ Thirty minutes **AFTER** the last lightning strike within a 6-mile range using the Flash-to-Bang method.
- ❖ Thirty minutes **AFTER** the last lightning strike within the appropriate range on the SkyScan Lightning Detector.

During a meet, the races will resume once the SPL President, coaches and meet officials have conferred and the above criteria have been met. Any race that was suspended or stopped during its progress may be rerun or cancelled at the sole discretion of the SPL President and the coaches based upon the circumstances. Based upon weather conditions, the entire meet or remaining portion of the meet after suspension of activity may be cancelled.

**OTHER LIGHTNING SAFETY TIPS:**

1. There should be no contact with metal objects (bleachers, fences)
2. Avoid single or tall trees, tall objects and standing in a group.
3. If there is no other shelter you may seek refuge in a hardtop vehicle. It is not the rubber tires protect from lightning; it is the hard top metal roof that dissipates the lightning around the vehicle.
4. The existence of blue skies and/or absence of rain are not protection from lightning. Lightning can strike 10 miles from the rain shaft.
5. **DO NOT LIE FLAT ON THE GROUND.**
6. Avoid using a land line telephone. Cell phones are a safe alternative if in a safe structure.
7. Avoid standing water and open fields.
8. If in a forest, seek shelter in a low area under a thick grove of small trees.
9. **If you feel your skin tingling immediately crouch and grab your legs and tuck your head as described above to minimize your body's surface area.**
10. Persons who have been struck by lightning do not carry an electrical charge. Therefore, enact the EMS system and provide emergency care. CPR is what is most often required. If possible, move the victim to a safe location.
11. For additional information refer to the National Lightning Safety Institute at [www.lightningsafety.com](http://www.lightningsafety.com)

**DIRECTIONS FOR USING THE SKYSCAN LIGHTNING DETECTOR**

1. Prior to competition, monitor weather forecast via the Internet or by calling local agencies for up to date information.
2. Check for any National Weather Service-issued thunderstorm "watches" and "warnings".
3. Monitor the weather for the following: sudden decrease in temperature, increase in air movement, sudden increase in humidity visible dark clouds (though these do not have to be present for a lightning strike to occur)
4. Communicate with meet officials and/or head coach prior to activity about potential for bad weather and our monitoring system.
5. Locate the SkyScan Lightning/Storm Detector in an area removed from other electronic devices or machinery, which could cause a false triggering.
6. The SkyScan Lightning/Storm Detector is designed to work in a vertical position.
7. Turn the unit on, by depressing the on/off switch.
8. Allow the unit to perform a self-check and make sure all lights are working correctly.
9. If you are using the AC Adapter, depress the "Battery Save" button twice to extend the life of the back up batteries.
10. Press the tone button to activate the warning tone. (This must be done every time the lightning detector is turned on.)
11. Set the range of detection by depressing the "Range Select" button until the 8-20 mile light is illuminated.
12. Each time the SkyScan detects a lightning stroke it emits an audible warning tone for 1 second (it is not very loud so if there is ANY chance of bad weather you must have the SkyScan out where you can see and hear it).
13. Following the beep the lightning Range indicator column will light up for approximately 3 seconds. The single indicator corresponding to the range of the detected stroke will blink for approximately 25 seconds.
14. Activity will be suspended when:
  - A. The Flash/Bang Method reveals lightning within a 6 mile range (30 second or less count between the flash of lightning and the bang of thunder)
  - B. Weather conditions and advisory information based on the SkyScan registering 2 consecutive lightning strokes within the 8-20 mile range dictates suspension
15. Once you have determined that there is imminent danger of a lightning strike, communicate to the SPL President and/or head meet official.
16. Evacuate the course and staging and tent area to an enclosed building. **REMEMBER**, an open shelter does not provide protection from a lightning strike. If there is no available shelter, each individual should seek

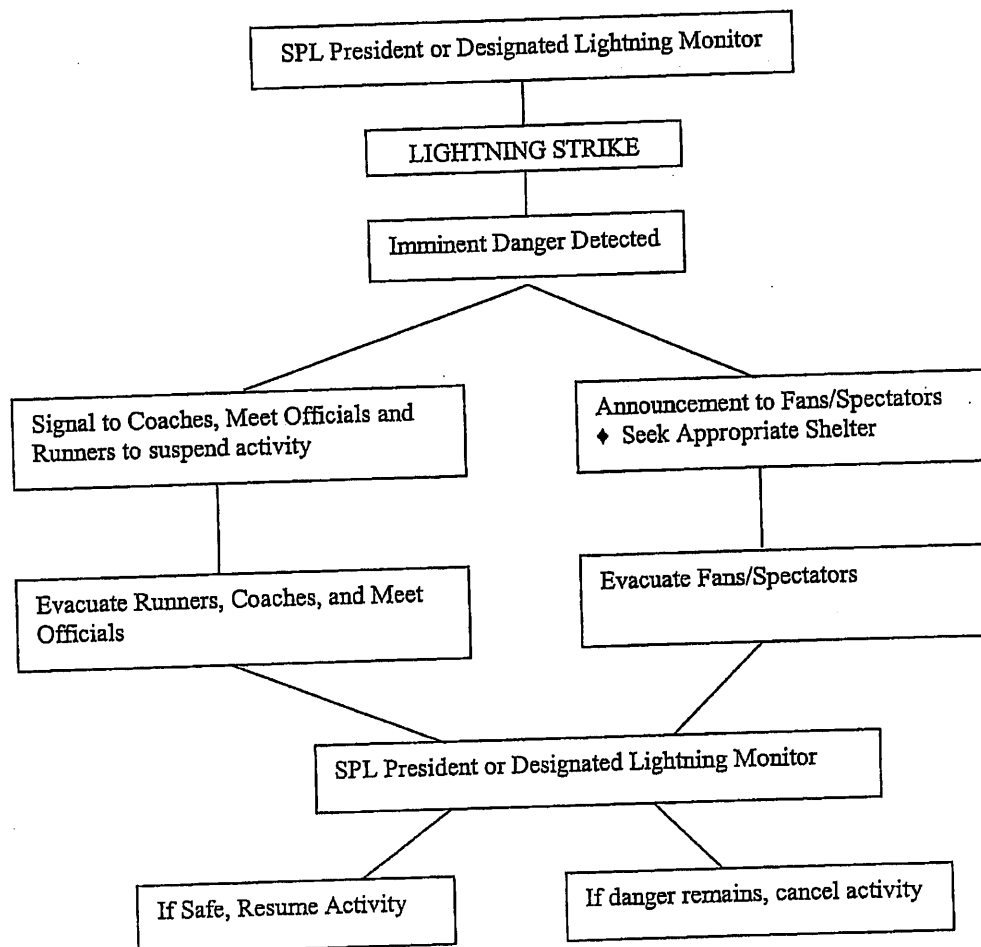
- an area that is flat and in the open. Crouch down wrapping your arms around your knees and remain in that position until the danger of lightning has passed.
17. Activity may be resumed only IF the danger of a lightning strike is no longer present. This decision to resume activity is to be made by the SPL President or his/her designee and the coaches.
  18. The SkyScan can also detect severe weather conditions (high winds, tornadoes, etc) that may pose a threat to human life. The severe weather audible warning lasts for 15 seconds and the corresponding indicator on the unit lights up.

FLASH-to-BANG Lightning Detection Method

This method of lightning detection should be used in conjunction with the SkyScan.

1. Prior to competition, monitor weather forecast to include calling local agencies for up to date information.
2. Watch for the flash of lightning.
3. Begin to count (one one thousand, two one thousand. . .)
4. Stop counting when you hear the bang of thunder.
5. Take this number and divide by 5. This will give you an approximation of how far away the lightning is (5 seconds = 1 mile). EXAMPLE: You see a flash of lightning and you begin to count. You reach 45 before you hear the bang of thunder.  $45 \div 5 = 9$ . The lightning would be approximately 9 miles away. Using this method you would suspend activity with lightning at or within 6 miles.
6. Activity is resumed with the permission of the SPL President or his/her designee 30 minutes after the last lightning detected at or within 6 miles.


**Chain of Action for Lightning Emergencies**



Suburban Parochial League Cross Country

Minutes of July 25, 2005 Meeting

Held at Lincoln Center in Downers Grove at 7:00 p.m.

1. Attendance and Introductions: The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. and roll call was taken. All schools were present. One by one the representatives introduced themselves.
  2. Sign In Sheets: A Cross Country Contact List was circulated. Members updated or revised the contact information for the representatives of their school.
  3. League Rules: A full copy of the October 2004 Rules and Procedures was handed out to everyone.
  4. Treasury Report: None.
  5. Equipment Manager Report: A discussion involved the status of the equipment and where it is located. It was believed that Mark McDonnell (630-606-3408) had possession of the equipment. Vogler indicated he would follow up and confirm status of the equipment.
  6. Old Business:
    - A. The schools discussed changing the shoot setup at the finish line to avoid a tight squeeze at the finish. The consensus was to move the finish line a distance of 5 to 8 feet outward from the narrow shoot and to broaden the finish line. This will be done at the first SPL meet on September 10, 2005 hosted by St. Irene. The intent is to prevent collisions and pushing at the finish by giving the runners more room. If the change works satisfactorily, then it will be implemented for all meets.
    - B. The consensus was to continue to distribute ribbons for individual places 6 through 25 at the scorer's tent immediately when the boy or girl turns in his or her stick for that position after every race, including the Championship Meet. The intent is to reduce the time for award ceremony.
    - C. The schools reviewed draft Lightning Safety Guidelines. The guidelines were patterned after the guidelines implemented by the University of West Alabama. There was extensive discussion about reliance on the SkyScan Lightning Detector and the Flash-to-Bang Method to make decisions about suspending or canceling the cross country races. A discussion addressed the potential ramifications of relying on lightning activity at a range of 8 to 20 miles away from the event. The consensus was that the lack of operating experience with the new SkyScan system made it
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difficult to gauge the practicalities of using lightning activity at a range of 8 to 20 miles from the event as a mechanism to make decisions. A fog horn warning signal to stop activities was recommended. The consensus of the schools, except for the objection of St. Scholastica, was to rely on the Flash-to-Bang Method to make evacuation decisions and use the 8 to 20 mile range detections of the SkyScan as informational until more operating experience has occurred. The schools discussed the decision making on restarting, canceling or adopting partially-completed results on a race stopped during progress. The consensus was to be flexible on the approach and follow the guidelines that "any race that was suspended or stopped during its progress may be rerun or cancelled at the sole discretion of the SPL President and the coaches based upon the circumstances." The schools adopted the Lightning Safety Guidelines subject to the consensus described and objections above.

7. **New Business:** The schools were advised that rosters are to be submitted to Lloyd Shields by September 1<sup>st</sup>. After discussion and based on a present balance of about \$3,000 in the account, the consensus was to set League Fees at \$100 per school for the 2005 season. The schools were asked to provide the number of total students in grades 5 through 8 so that the schools can be classified in Class "AA" or Class "A" for the championship meet. The awards shirts for the SPL championship meet were discussed. The consensus was to purchase the shirts without finding a financial sponsor and to order equal amounts in 3 sizes - - Adult small, Adult medium and Adult large. The schools discussed the number of meets that a school could participate in during the season. There was uncertainty as to such limits. The consensus was to investigate the matter through the Joliet Diocesan Guidelines.
  
8. **Confirmed Worker Assignments for 2005:** The schools confirmed their agreement to the following worker assignments:
 

i.	St. Michael	Hand Out Boys Ribbons 6-25 places @ finish
ii.	Immaculate Conception	Hand Out Girls Ribbons 6-25 places @ finish
iii.	St. James	Sticks (buy, organize and deliver to scoring tables)
iv.	Our Lady of Peace	Order Ribbons, T-shirts, Plaques & Banners
v.	Our Lade of Peace	Starter; Maintain Starting Pistol
vi.	St. Raphael	Boys Timer
vii.	St. Dominics	Boys Backup Timer
viii.	St. Dominics	Scorer Girls for the LT Meet
ix.	Notre Dame	Sticks (hand out to boys & girls @ finish)
x.	St. Joan of Arc	Head Boys Scorer
xi.	St. Petronille	Boys Scorer

xii.	Holy Trinity	Boys Scorer
xiii.	St. Mary's	Boys Scorer; Girls Backup Timer
xiv.	St. Alexander	Scoring Tent Set Up
xv.	St. Alexander	Equipment Storage
xvi.	St. Cletus	Score Sheets
xvii.	Sts. Peter & Paul	Shoot Control
xviii.	St. Isaac	Shoot Control
xix.	St. Scholastica	Shoot Control
xx.	Sacred Heart/Christ the King	Girls Timer
xxi.	St. John of the Cross	Head Girls Scorer (except for LT Meet)
xxii.	Visitation	Girls Scorer
xxiii.	St. Francis	Girls Scorer

9. Confirmed Meet Schedule for 2005:

- A. Saturday, Sept. 10, SPL meet hosted by St. Irene @ Summerlakes Park/Johnson School
- B. Saturday, Sept. 17, SPL meet hosted by St. John @ Lyons Township H.S.
- C. Saturday, Sept. 24, SPL meet hosted by St. Joan @ Marmion
- D. Saturday, Oct. 1, SPL meet hosted by St. Raphael @ May Watts Park
- E. Saturday, Oct. 8, SPL Championship meet hosted by St. Petronille @ Sunset Knoll Park

The host schools were asked to forward maps to Vogler for circulation to all of the SPL schools.

10. Invitational Meets Sponsored by High Schools: It appeared that the following meets were still on target to occur:

- A. Wednesday, Sept. 7, Driscoll H.S. Invitational @ Churchill Woods
- B. Wednesday, Sept. 14, St. Francis H.S. Invitational @ Cantigny

It was reported that the Driscoll meet would be limited to the first ten schools that applied. Schools were advised to contact Driscoll H.S. and Jim Maggiore (ph. 630-543-6310) if interested. There was uncertainty as to whether Montini H.S. would hold a meet this year.

- 11. Next Meeting: Tuesday, October 25, 2005 @ 7:00 p.m. at Lincoln Center, Downers Grove.