



## **COLLEGE CONFERENCE OF ILLINOIS AND WISCONSIN LIGHTNING AND INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY**

Unquestionably, the underlying basis for decisions related to the starting, suspension and resumption of athletics contests that may be affected by lightning and/or inclement weather is the safety and welfare of the participants and spectators. The following policies are for the purpose of providing general direction to administrators, coaches, athletic training staff and game officials in making these decisions, particularly as it relates to issues of authority. It should be noted that these guidelines are intended to compliment the NCAA Guidelines for Lightning Safety or the NATA position statement on lightning. Consequently, each individual institution is encouraged to develop more detailed policies and procedures specific to their unique circumstances (e.g., field locations, personnel). These policies and procedures should include, but are not limited to:

- (1) the identification of safe structures or locations;
- (2) the establishment of plans for the safe and efficient evacuation of participants and spectators;
- (3) the implementation of basic first-aid procedures in order to manage victims of lightning strikes or other severe weather injuries; and
- (4) identify the means by which participants and spectators are to be informed of pending weather dangers and the possible evacuation order.

### **Lightning/Inclement Weather**

While lightning is the most consistent and significant weather hazard that may affect an outdoor contest, other types of severe weather conditions (e.g., tornadoes) are not to be ignored. Education and planning are the keys to safely dealing with lightning and inclement weather. Staff members and game officials need to know the dangers and what their responsibilities are in the event lightning and/or inclement weather is evident.

In relation to decisions regarding the starting, suspension or resumption of a contest due to lightning or inclement weather, the CCIW shall follow the following guidelines:

- The host institution's athletic trainer (or other person designated by the host administration who is not a game official or coach) will be the designated spotter. A spotter's responsibilities include monitoring weather reports, employing the Flash-to-Bang method (as prescribed in the NCAA Sports Medicine Handbook) to determine the proximity of the storm via the use of the campus lightning detection system (e.g., Thor) and alerting the host administration and game officials of a potentially unsafe weather development. Decisions regarding the proximity of the lightning shall be made in accordance with the host school's policy. Generally, a safe distance is between three to eight miles.

- Prior to the start of a contest, decisions regarding whether a contest will begin rests with the host administration. The host administration should confer with the participating coaches, game officials, conference office personnel (if possible), an administrator representing the visiting team (if present) and the athletic training staff of the host institution.
- Once a contest has begun, the decision to suspend and subsequently resume a contest is the responsibility of the game official(s) in the case of playing surface or field condition issues, such as unsafe field conditions due to rain, etc. The decision to restart a contest due to weather conditions, such as lightning or tornadoes in the vicinity, is the decision of the host school administration. Game officials and the host school administration are expected to confer with an administrator representing the visiting team (if present), conference office personnel (if possible), participating coaches and the athletic training staff of the host institution. If a game is suspended due to lightning activity, schools must wait at least 30 minutes after the last lightning flash or sound of thunder prior to resuming play.
- Decisions regarding the starting, suspension and resumption of a contest are to be made independent of considerations related to any team gaining a competitive advantage. Among the factors that should be considered are travel issues such as distance, expenses, missed class time, severity of the weather conditions, immediate weather forecast and playing field conditions. In all cases, the safety and welfare of the participants and spectators is the single most important consideration.
- Weather-related decisions involving conference championship/postseason events will be made by the executive director and/or the designated tournament committee.