

# Charlotte Warrior Football and Cheer Association, INC.

## Safe Environment Policy

### PROVIDE SAFE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Although facility managers, building owners and other operators have certain responsibilities for providing a safe environment in and around their facilities, coaches are responsible for inspecting all areas to be utilized in practice and competition to identify hazards. This includes locker rooms, workout rooms, gymnasiums, equipment and fields. Coaches also should ensure that proper emergency care and safety equipment is available and accessible. Coaches should document their facility inspections because they can be beneficial in defending against certain lawsuits. In addition, please note it is not sufficient simply to identify a hazard. You should take action by having the item corrected, posting warning signs, and/or keeping athletes/spectators away from the hazard.

Guidelines to Provide a Safe Environment

- 1. Regularly and thoroughly inspect all building areas, equipment, fields, courses and other playing surfaces used by the athletes.**
- 2. Inspect potentially dangerous equipment, heavy-use equipment and protective equipment frequently.**
- 3. Ensure that unused equipment is not stored in or dangerously close to a playing area.**
- 4. Ensure that wall-mounted devices that could cause injury are padded and light bulbs have protective coverings.**
- 5. During extreme weather, inspect equipment and fields, courses, and other outside playing surfaces, including support structures that could become unsafe.**
- 6. Ask athletes to report any unsafe conditions related to the facility, equipment, fields,**

**courses, and other playing surfaces.**

**7. Report (in writing) damage to the facility, fields, and courses, and request to have it repaired. Inspect repairs when completed. Include photos of the damage with the written report if possible.**

**8. Prevent athletes from using unsafe building areas, equipment, fields, courses, and other playing surfaces. In particular, remove unsafe equipment immediately to prevent inadvertent or prohibited use.**

**9. Ensure the facility provides access to water for adequate fluid replacement for athletes during all practices and competitions, or provide a separate source. Report any water quality problems to those responsible.**

**10. Ensure easy access to emergency equipment and first aid supplies.**

**11. Ensure telephone or radio access to enable contact with emergency medical services.**

**12. Ensure, if possible, telephone contact with parent or guardian if not present.**

### **Inclement Weather**

Monitoring weather conditions is the responsibility of the game officials, coaches, and league and association administrators. All should be aware of the potential dangers posed by different weather conditions and work together to keep the players and other participants as safe as possible. Coaches should monitor weather conditions including warnings and watches issued by the National Weather Service. According to the National Weather Service, a “watch” means severe weather is possible during the next few hours, while a “warning” means that severe weather has been observed or is expected soon.

Prior to a game, coaches and game officials should discuss the procedures they will follow if inclement weather becomes an issue. In the case of inclement weather a game may be called for two reasons:

- Condition of the playing field.
- Weather at game time.

## **Weather at game time/Practice**

Coaches and referees must exercise their best judgment to determine whether or not a field is in playable condition or if lightning is a potential hazard. If the area has had a large amount of rain and the fields are not in playing shape, games should be called as early as possible. If there is any lightning in the area at game time, the game official is to cancel the game immediately. In addition, if it is raining heavily at game time, the game official can call the game.

If a decision is made to continue play (this should never be the case if lightning is an issue), and a parent does not agree with the decision, the coach should support the parent's decision to remove the child from the game.

## **Severe Storm**

Severe storms can produce damaging high winds, hail, heavy rain, lightning and/or tornadoes. If a severe storm approaches the playing area, the safety of the players may require that the game be suspended and immediate shelter sought. Coaches should always err on the side of caution when considering whether to call a game or cancel a practice for weather concerns.

## **Lightning**

Lightning is the second leading cause of storm related deaths (flooding is first). Lightning can strike up to 10 miles outside of a thunderstorm, literally a bolt from the blue. The danger from lightning can persist for at least 30 minutes or more after a thunderstorm has passed. The National Weather Service does not issue watches or warnings for lightning by itself.

If a person can hear thunder, or see lightning, the danger is already present. A clear, sunny sky overhead with storm clouds nearby can still be dangerous

**The following guidelines are recommended to determine if hazardous conditions exist:**

- If lightning is within 5 miles, the game(s) should be suspended and shelter sought. A lightning detector can identify the distance accurately but may not be available. A rough guideline is to measure the time between the lightning flash and hearing the corresponding thunder. If it is 30 seconds or less, seek shelter. It may not be possible to determine which lightning strike generated which roll of thunder.

- Know the availability and location(s) of nearby shelter(s) in advance.
- Shelter should be in larger, enclosed structures. Do not stay in open, unprotected areas.
- Smaller, open structures such as tents, trees, and isolated areas should be avoided.
- Cars, with windows rolled up, or buses can provide good shelter. Avoid contact with metal or other conducting materials to the outside surfaces.
- Games should not be restarted for at least 30 minutes after the last roll of thunder is heard.
- The team(s) should be advised of notification and evacuation plans and places to seek shelter near practice and competition sites.

Coaches should discuss methods for notifying athletes of cancelled events (competition or practice) at the beginning of the season. For example, the coach may want the athletes to call him or her directly for the status or may want to implement a phone tree notification system.

**Transportation**

Some of the most devastating losses for a coach or organization involve motor vehicle accidents.

Coaches and administrators should protect themselves against the risks with driving while they are volunteering. Transportation of those with injuries or illnesses should be handled only by emergency response personnel or the parent(s) of the injured/ill.

Coaches and administrators should avoid driving alone with a non-family athlete. However, in the event an athlete remains at a field waiting for transportation, the coach should wait with the athlete to guarantee the athlete's safety and well-being. (Coaches should stress to the parents the responsibility for safe and timely transportation to and from the field.)