

POLICY / PROCEDURE TITLE:	INCLEMENT WEATHER / THOR GUARD PROCEDURE
DATE WRITTEN (UPDATED):	
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Purpose:

GFSA has installed a lightning prediction system manufactured by Thor Guard, Inc. in order to warn athletes, participants, and spectators at Brandywine Park when a danger of lightning strike exists. The lightning prediction system consist of sensors measuring electrostatic charges that build prior to lightning occurrences.

System Description:

The Thor Guard system is designed to predict a lightning strike within a defended geographical region and provide a “RED ALERT” consisting of audible and visual warning approximately 2 to 8 minutes before lightning strikes are experienced within the region. The system uses a highly sophisticated sensor and computer to measure and analyze the electrostatic field in the atmosphere. Lightning originates within this field, thus allowing Thor Guard to make calculations predicting its occurrence even though there may be no visible evidence of lightning. Therefore, unlike lightning detection systems, which require the occurrence of an actual lightning strike before issuing a warning, the Thor Guard system is able to predict so called “Bolts out of the Blue” which are strikes that seem to come from nowhere and cause a high percentage of lightning fatalities.

Hazard Levels provided by the Thor Guard Lightning Prediction system:

ALL CLEAR – Indicates a safe environment. All activities may continue without interruption

CAUTION – Normal energy shifts are occurring. All activities may continue without interruption

WARNING – A significant amount of energy has moved into the area being monitored. All outdoor activities may continue; however all individuals involved should have a heightened awareness of potential weather conditions

RED ALERT – All outdoor activities must cease. All individuals must seek shelter. Outdoor activities may not continue until an ALL CLEAR level is reached.

Thor Guard Display’s current information on the following items:

LHL (Lighting Hazard Level) – represents the current level of energy (on a scale of 1 to 9) in the TOTAL area being monitored. This will be activated before any “DI” reading and will indicate when energy is first active in your region.

DI (Dynamic Index) represent excursion of energy (on a scale of 1.0 to 9.9) within the 2 mile primary radius being monitored. You will note that at a level of 2.4 (which represents a 24% chance that lightning could be locally active) the unit has reached the “Warning” Level.

- DI 0.0 = ALL CLEAR
- DI 0.0-2.3 = CAUTION

- DI 2.3-2.9 = WARNING
- DI 3.0+ = RED ALERT

AD (Activity Detector) displaying projected time until resumption of safe operations. Counts down from 10 minutes and resets as DI climbs.

RED ALERT - will sound a 15 second air horn alert and activate the strobe light located on top of the Soccer Concession stand.

ALL CLEAR - Signal will sound Three 5-second horn blast, two seconds apart and the strobe light will deactivate.

The Air Horns are programed to only sound alerts during the hours of 8:00am – 10:00pm

Procedure / Policy:

While the system is not infallible, and common sense should still be followed, the system will be an important tool.

SUSPENDING ACTIVITES AND SEEKING SHELTER

When a RED ALERT signal (One 15 second blast of the horns and the strobe light starts blinking) is sounded all activities will be suspended once the THOR Guard horn goes off. Everyone must clear their playing field and evacuate to an appropriate shelter indoors.

Appropriate shelters include the concession stand, equipment room, golf cart room, restrooms, inside a vehicle. DO NOT Seek shelter under towers, trees, or tall objects that could attract a lighting strike.

RESUMPTION OF ACTIVITES

Activates may be resumed after having been suspended when the THOR Guard system gives the “ALL CLEAR” signal (Three 5 second blasts of the horns and the strobe light stops blinking). In the event there is a problem with the THOR GUARD system, activities may be resumed 30 minutes after the last incidence of lighting and thunder in the area.

Responsibility:

GFSA Operations staff monitor and operate the system

Field Marshals and Head Referee should start monitoring the area when THOR GUARD is showing a “WARNING”

When Thor Guard system activates an “RED ALERT”, GFSA Operations staff on site, Field Marshals, Referee’s, commissioners, and coaches are responsible for clearing soccer fields and advising spectators and others to seek appropriate shelter.

Canceling Activities:

Recreational Program – During Game activities the Field Marshal and Head referee will monitor the storm and will agree upon the amount of time to suspend the activity or cancel the activity

Travel Soccer games – During a Travel soccer activity the Center Referee and both coaches will monitor the storm and agree upon amount of time to suspend a match or to cancel the match.

TOPSoccer – During a TOPS soccer activity the TOPS Director and TOPS coach will monitor the storm and will agree upon the amount of time to suspend the activity or cancel the activity

Practices – During a practice activity the coach will make the decision as to suspend the practice or cancel the practice.