



## **Severe Weather Policy (Lightning)**

Spirit of Atlanta Drum & Bugle Corps will abide by the National Athletic Trainers' Association Position Statement: Lightning Safety for Athletics and Recreation.

Staff Responsibility: It is the responsibility of all staff (medical, educational, and administration) to be aware of lightning hazards and the specific safety shelter for their venue/site. In the event of lightning during a rehearsal, show or event, precautions must be taken to ensure the safety of members, staff, and spectators.

Medical Staff Responsibility: The medical staff, in conjunction with administration and applicable public safety officials, (i.e. police or event staff) will be responsible for monitoring inclement weather. The medical staff will promptly communicate alerts via Slack to the rest of the staff and members with instructions on when to seek shelter and timelines for when it is safe to return to outdoor activities. **No one is allowed to override medical staff's decision regarding severe weather.**

### Lightning Detection Methods:

The medical staff will use two methods to confirm lightning detection in the current area the corps is rehearsing:

1. Flash to Bang - count how many seconds between flash of lightning and crack of thunder, divide by 5 = how many miles lightning is from site
2. WeatherBug Spark app - real time tracking of lightning proximity from current location

### Stages of Severe Weather Alerts:

The medical staff will communicate via Slack which stage of severe weather we are in. Staff should take notice to these alerts and respond accordingly:

1. Weather Advisory (S1): **Watching Weather**, lightning 10-15 miles away; may continue outdoor rehearsal, but be aware of your surroundings
2. Weather Watch (S2): **Seek Shelter**, lightning 8-9 miles away; should provide enough time to move members and equipment indoors/to a safe location



3. Weather Warning (S3): **Remain Indoors or in a Safe Location**, lightning 7 or less miles away; DO NOT take time to move equipment unless it can be hand carried
4. All Clear: 30 minutes after last lightning strike seen and last thunder roll heard. No lightning detected within 15 miles for 30 minutes. May return safely to outdoor activity.

Medical staff will keep track of the 30 minute timer prior to giving the “All Clear.” The 30 minute timer resets if lightning strikes are seen or thunder is heard from the corps’ current location. It also resets if lightning is detected within 15 miles of the corps’ current location. **No one is allowed to override medical staff’s decision regarding All Clear status. Educational staff should not lead members outside for rehearsal until the All Clear alert is provided to all staff via Slack.**

Visible blue sky or the absence of rain does not indicate that a person is safe because lightning can strike far from the rain and even far outside the apparent cloud edge. Waiting 30 minutes to resume activities after hearing any thunder or seeing any lightning yields 90-95% confidence that no more lightning will occur.

#### Safe Shelter:

Ideally, all staff and members will seek shelter inside the housing site building or a safe building located on the show site property. Educational staff should be aware of the closest safe shelter to the rehearsal site and roughly how long it takes to reach that shelter. A safe structure or location is defined as “any sturdy, fully enclosed, substantial, and frequently inhabited building that has plumbing and/or electrical wiring that acts to electrically ground the structure”.

Examples of locations that generally DO NOT meet this criteria:

- Baseball/softball dugout
- Baseball/softball “covered” batting cages
- Soccer covered benches
- Under metal bleachers
- Outside storage sheds



In the absence of a sturdy, fully enclosed, frequently inhabited location as described above, a secondary structure such as a fully enclosed vehicle or tour bus with a hard metal roof, rubber tires, and completely closed windows can provide a measure of safety. Avoid touching the sides of the vehicle. If indoors, please avoid taking showers or using plumbing facilities (besides the toilet) during a thunderstorm.

If no safe structure or location is within a reasonable distance, staff should find and lead members to a thick grove of small trees surrounded by taller trees or a dry ditch. Everyone should assume the “lightning-safe” position: a crouched position on the ground with the feet together, weight on the balls of the feet, head lowered, and ears covered. Do not lie flat. Minimize the body’s surface area and minimize contact with the ground.

If unable to reach safe shelter, everyone should stay away from the tallest trees or objects (i.e. light poles, flag poles, etc.), metal objects (i.e. fences, bleachers, etc.), individual trees, standing pools of water, and open fields. Avoid being the highest object in an open field. Do not play metal instruments or handle metal equipment/props.

#### Resources:

Walsh, Katie M., et al. “National Athletic Trainers' Association Position Statement: Lightning Safety for Athletics and Recreation.” *Journal of Athletic Training*, vol. 48, no. 2, 2013, pp. 258–270., <https://doi.org/10.4085/1062-6050-48.2.25>.