



Arsenal Colorado Lightning Safety Guidelines

The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure the safety of players, coaches, officials, spectators, and staff by minimizing lightning risk. The National Lightning Safety Institute notes that absolute lightning safety is impossible, as lightning has its own agenda and sometimes ignores science maxims. However, by following an established safety plan, the risks lightning poses to outdoor athletic events can be greatly minimized.

General Safety Guidelines

1. Safety is the number one priority and when in doubt a conservative and safe decision should be made.
2. The coach shall monitor conditions before and during all events to determine if conditions are safe for play. If a coach is unable to perform this function, he or she should designate a person to monitor weather conditions for the team. This individual must be present at the event in question. Never assume that the opposition has a plan in place at away venues.
3. In locations that have a lightning warning system or supervisor tasked with making weather decisions, any decision to vacate the fields shall be complied with efficiently and not be challenged.
4. In the absence of a complex-wide lightning warning system or event supervisor tasked with making weather decisions, coaches should work with referees and any designated weather watcher to make smart decisions regarding the safe playing conditions.
5. Anyone has the right to seek shelter at any time from conditions they feel are unsafe and will not be penalized for his or her choice.
6. Colorado weather is unpredictable and ever-changing. A vigilant eye should be kept on changes to the conditions.

Arsenal Colorado Lightning Safety Plan

Fort Collins Soccer Complex

The Fort Collins Soccer Complex is protected by the Thor Guard Lightning Prediction System. The Thor Guard System has proven to be extremely reliable and has been installed in many parks, schools and golf courses nationwide. This is the same system used on the Colorado State University campus. Here is how it works:

When the system detects the probability of a lightning hazard in the immediate area, a LIGHTNING ALARM SIGNAL (one 15 second horn blast) will sound. This signals the suspension of activities. A strobe light will begin flashing and remain flashing until safe conditions return. One strobe light is mounted on top of the maintenance building on the northeast corner of the complex, and the other is positioned at the southeast corner of the fields. All players, spectators, officials and staff are expected to immediately clear the fields and seek appropriate shelter. Activities may resume only after THREE 5 second blasts of the horn are sounded and the strobe light stops flashing.



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The Thor Guard Lightning Prediction System status is also accessible through the website listed below. This allows coaches, parents and players access to the complex status in real time without having to see or hear the actual strobe light and alarm. There is a full website and mobile version available here:

<https://360.thormobile.net/arsenalco/>

Due to the unpredictability of weather patterns in Colorado, it is possible for the alert to sound multiple times within a relatively short period, even when there appears to be no danger. While delaying activities can be frustrating, the Thor Guard system's warnings must be heeded at all times. The Thor Guard system is an important tool to increase the safety of all participants. Lightning is a severe hazard that must be taken seriously. Common sense is important and everyone should immediately seek shelter any time they believe lightning threatens them, even if a signal has not been sounded!

Other Locations

In locations where an advanced lightning detection is not employed, the coach or designated weather observer should utilize all technology available to determine whether conditions are safe. Arsenal Colorado recommends using the WeatherBug Spark app which delivers lightning strike alerts based on your phone's location. Other equivalent apps would be appropriate as well.

Any decision to suspend activities should take into account the proximity of the lightning, how fast the storm may be approaching, and distance to safety. At a minimum, the fields should always be cleared and all participants in a safe place by the time lightning is within 7 miles.

If a team is in a location where cell phone or other equivalent technology is unavailable, activities should be suspended when thunder can be heard, which generally indicates that lightning is striking within 10 miles.

Players and coaches should not return to the field until at least 30 minutes after the last close lightning flash or audible thunder.