



CAL RIPKEN BASEBALL

A Division of Babe Ruth League, Inc.

2010 MYB LIGHTNING / THUNDER PROCEDURE

Severe Weather

Severe weather refers to a host of potential dangers, including lightning storms, tornadoes, hail, and heavy rains (which can cause injuries by creating sloppy field conditions).

Lightning is of special concern because it can develop quickly and cause great harm or even kill. For each 5-second count from the flash of lightning to the bang of thunder, lightning is 1 mile away. A flash-bang of 10 seconds means lightning is 2 miles away; a flash-bang of 15 seconds indicates lightning is 3 miles away. A practice or competition should be stopped at least temporarily if lightning is 6 miles away or closer (flash-bang of 30 seconds). Athletes and spectators should already be in a safe location by the time the flash-bang reaches 30 seconds. They should stay there and play should remain halted until 30 minutes after the last sound of thunder or visible lightning flash.

Safe places in which to take cover when lightning strikes are fully enclosed metal vehicles with the windows up, enclosed buildings, and low ground (under cover of bushes, if possible). It's not safe to be near metallic objects—flag poles, fences, light poles, metal bleachers, and so on. Also avoid trees, water, and open fields. Because many athletes and spectators will flee to automobiles for cover in cases of severe weather, it is important to remind them to keep their windows up and to avoid touching any metal objects that are inside the vehicle.

Cancel practices and/or games when under either a tornado watch or warning. If for some reason you are practicing or competing when a tornado is nearby, you should get inside a building if possible. If not, lie in a ditch or other low area or crouch near a strong building, assuming a position in which you can use your arms to protect your head and neck.

The keys to handling severe weather are caution and prudence. Don't try to get that last 10 minutes of practice in if lightning is on the horizon. Don't continue to play in heavy rains. Many storms can strike both quickly and ferociously. Respect the weather, and play it safe.