

Policy Number: 405 (NEW)
Policy Name: Lightning Detection System
Approval Authority: President's Senior Leadership Team
Responsible Executive: Vice President with Oversight of Facilities Management
Responsible Unit: Facilities Management
Date Adopted: (April 2024)
Date Revised:

Policy

Ramapo College wishes to maintain a safe environment for all of its students, employees, and visitors. The College deploys a lightning detection system at its Athletics Complex to protect persons using the area. The purpose of the lightning detection system is to provide ample notice to those at the Complex to seek shelter when lightning and/or stormy conditions may be approaching. Once activated, the detection system will monitor lightning activity and signal when it is safe to resume activities.

Reason for Policy

This policy ensures appropriate safety action is taken by College employees, students, the general public, and members of outside organizations utilizing the Athletics Complex as defined in the procedure set forth by the College.

To Whom Does the Policy Apply

- All members of Ramapo College
- All members of outside visiting organizations

Supplemental Resources

- [National Weather Service Lightning Safety Tips and Resources](#)
- [Strike Guard Lightning Warning System](#)
- [Ramapo College Athletics Lightning Detection System](#)

Contact

Athletics Department

Procedure 405: Lightning Detection System

Date Adopted: (April 2024)

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I. Siren & Strobe

Detection. When the lightning detection system detects lightning within 10 miles, the siren signal will be activated. The initial signal will remain activated for a period of approximately 18 seconds followed by the activation of a strobe light. Clear skies and a lack of precipitation are not protection from lightning. Lightning can strike from a distance as far as 10 miles.

II. Activity Stoppage

a. *Practice and community activity (including unorganized activity).* The decision regarding the stoppage of outdoor practice and community-based activities (organized and not-organized) will be directly correlated to the system siren signal. In such instances when the siren signals, immediate evacuation of outdoor fields and playing surfaces is required. On-site supervisors and officials may affirm and direct the activity stoppage based on the siren signal or by using other criteria associated with lightning safety. Whether the siren signals or not, visual observation may also be used by the official, trainer, or on-site supervisors to declare a stoppage

b. *College event or competition.* Pursuant to NJSIAA, NCAA, NJAC and/or other applicable rules, the decision regarding stoppage of play of an official game or contest is the domain of the on-site officials. This authority is unchallengeable. All coaches, officials and administrators need to abide by this to ensure the safety of all athletes, coaches, games managers, spectators, and all others who may be present.

III. All Clear – Resumption of Activity

a. *Strobe.* The strobe will remain active for about 30 minutes past the last lightning detected.

b. *Clearance signal.* A clearance signal will activate signifying a return to the outdoor location is permissible, and the strobe light will deactivate. Depending upon the nature of the outdoor activity (see sections B1 and B2), on-site officials, trainers, or on-site supervisors will determine whether to resume the activity.

IV. Shelter

a. *Safe areas.* In the event of lightning and immediate evacuation, persons present should seek shelter in safe areas such as:

- Enclosed buildings
- Fully enclosed metal vehicles with a hard metal roof and windows up

- Low ground areas as a last resort (ditches, bottom of hill); assume a crouched position; minimize your body area; do not lie flat

b. Unsafe areas. In the event of lightning and immediate evaluation, persons present should not seek shelter in unsafe areas such as:

- Open fields
- Golf carts/gators
- Metal bleachers (on or under)
- Fencing
- Umbrellas, flag poles, light poles
- Tall trees
- Pools of standing water

c. Risk mitigation. If caught in a lightning or thunderstorm without availability or time to reach safe areas, persons present may minimize the risk of lightning-related injury by:

- Avoiding being the highest object. Seek a thick grove of small trees or bushes surrounded by taller trees or a dry ditch.
- Avoiding contact with anything that would be attractive to lightning. Stay away from open fields, golf carts/gators, metal fences and structures, poles, antennas, towers, bleachers, freestanding trees, baseball dugouts, and pools of standing water.
- Crouching down with legs together, placing the weight on the balls of the feet, arms wrapped around knees, and head down with ears covered.

V. Hours of Operation

The lightning detection system's siren signal operates from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., seven days per week. The system's strobe light operates twenty-four hours per day, seven days per week.

VI. System Review and Maintenance

The lightning detection system is maintained by the Facilities Department. The system's functionality is annually reviewed by the system manufacturer/vendor. System failures must be immediately reported to Ramapo College Public Safety.