

School District of Altoona

Inclement Weather Closing Procedures for the Community Use of School Facilities

When the School District of Altoona experiences inclement weather conditions, safety is the most important consideration when determining whether or not to close facilities for use by community groups. If the district cancels the entire school day or dismisses school early due to inclement weather, all facility usage activities will also be cancelled for that day (no fees will be charged in this case). If school is not cancelled or dismissed early but inclement winter weather is forecast for the evening, the Athletics and Activities office will work with the Superintendent to make the decision regarding closing the facilities. The decision will be posted on the School District website. All efforts will be made to make decisions by 2:00 p.m. on weekdays in question.

Procedures for Weekend Usage (Saturday and Sunday)

When inclement weather is in the forecast for the weekend, the Athletics and Activities Office works with the district's Superintendent to review the list of all scheduled activities for the weekend. While our goal is to be able to provide snow removal for all activities, in some instances the decision may be made in advance to exclude snow removal for facilities where minimal usage is scheduled. If it is determined that the facility where your activity is scheduled will not be on the snow removal schedule, you will be contacted by the Athletics & Activities office to give you notice that your event may be cancelled if the inclement weather materializes.

Turf fields will typically not be closed due to inclement weather. However, turf fields may need to be closed if conditions entering the premises or on the field are deemed to be unsafe or may cause harm to School District property. The decision regarding the status of turf fields will be posted on the Facility Use page, found on the District's website.

Lightning policy

(Source: NFHS Rule Book)

The School District of Altoona follows NFHS and WIAA's guidelines as it relates to lightning. Here is a summary of the guidelines:

1. Assign staff to monitor local weather conditions before and during practices and contests.
2. Develop an evacuation plan, including identification of appropriate nearby safe areas and determine the amount of time needed to get everyone to a designated safer area:

- a. A designated safer place is a substantial building with plumbing and wiring where people live or work, such as a school, gymnasium or library. An alternate safer place from the threat of lightning is a fully enclosed (not convertible or soft top) metal car or school bus.
3. Develop criteria for suspension and resumption of play:
- a. When thunder is heard or a cloud-to-ground lightning bolt is seen, the leading edge of the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Suspend play for thirty minutes and take shelter immediately.
 - b. 30-minute rule. Once play has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or lightning is witnessed* prior to resuming play.
 - c. Any subsequent thunder or lightning* after the beginning of the 30-minute count will reset the clock and another 30-minute count should begin.
 - d. When lightning-detection devices or mobile phone apps are available, this technology could be used to assist in making a decision to suspend play if a lightning strike is noted to be within 10 miles of the event location. However, you should never depend on the reliability of these devices and, thus, hearing thunder or seeing lightning* should always take precedence over information from a mobile app or lightning-detection device.
- * – At night, under certain atmospheric conditions, lightning flashes may be seen from distant storms. In these cases, it may be safe to continue an event. If no thunder can be heard and the flashes are low on the horizon, the storm may not pose a threat. Independently verified lightning detection information would help eliminate any uncertainty.*
4. Review the lightning safety policy annually with all administrators, coaches and game personnel and train all personnel.
5. Inform student-athletes and their parents of the lightning policy at the start of the season.