Lightning Protocol

The purpose of this document is to establish a written lightning safety policy for the Utica College. It is imperative that all UC athletic teams and personnel are aware of lightning hazards and the specific safety shelter for their venue. The following policy is based on the specific recommendations as stated by the National Athletic Training Association (NATA) Lightning Safety position statement.

In the event of lightning during an official sport practice or event, precautions must be taken to ensure the safety of both athletes and spectators. In any event, the specific sport Certified Athletic Trainer (ATC), in conjunction with Event Management Staff and/or sport officials if necessary, will be responsible for monitoring inclement weather.

Our staff will utilize an online weather monitoring systems to determine participation status: WeatherSentry

WeatherSentry is an online weather service that can alert users to inclement weather. All sports medicine staff members have mobile access to the WeatherSentry app, which allows the monitoring of radar and lightning.

In the event that neither online monitoring system is unavailable, UC Staff will utilize the Flash-to-Bang method:

To use the flash-to-bang method,

1. Count the seconds from the time lightning is sighted to when the clap of thunder is heard.
2. Divide this number by five (5) to obtain how far away in miles the lightning is occurring.
3. For example, if an individual counts 30 seconds between seeing the flash and hearing the bang, 30 divided by 5 equals 6; therefore, the lightning flash is approximately 6 miles away.
4. As a minimum, the NCAA and the National Severe Storms Laboratory (NSSL) strongly recommend that all individuals leave the athletic site and reach a safe location by the flash-to-bang method of 30 seconds (6 miles).

As a minimum, the NCAA requires evacuation of athletic venues when a storm is within 6 miles, but per the Utica College athletics protocol, events or activities will be suspended and venues will be evacuated when the WeatherSentry app or Flash-to-Bang identify a 8 mile warning. Once activities or events have been suspended, the ATC, with assistance of Event Management Staff and/or Game officials if necessary, will use the “all clear” signal after WeatherSentry App as well as visual observations indicates no lighting strikes within 8 miles in the last 30 minutes. It is the NATA Position Statement recommendation to wait at least 30 minutes after the last visible strike or audible thunder before resuming activity.

In addition to the policy for observing and tracking lightning during practices and events, the following are designated as Lightning Safe Shelters

Gaetano Stadium, Baseball Field, and Grass Soccer Field: Hutton Dome or Clark Athletic Center

Softball Field: Vehicles

Tennis Courts: Clark Athletic Center, Hutton Dome or Vehicles

Outdoor throwing pit: Hutton dome or Clark Athletic Center