GUIDELINES ON HANDLING PRACTICES AND CONTESTS DURING LIGHTNING OR THUNDER DISTURBANCES

These guidelines provide a default policy to those responsible or sharing duties for making decisions concerning the suspension and restarting of practices and contests based on the presence of lightning or thunder. The preferred sources from which to request such a policy for your facility would include your state high school activities association and the nearest office of the National Weather Service.

PROACTIVE PLANNING

1. Assign a volunteer to monitor local weather conditions before and during practices and contests.

2. In the event of lightning all participants must vacate the field of play and bleacher/spectator areas. The players may be restricted to the dugout or asked to leave the facility.

3. Criteria for suspension and resumption of play:

a. When thunder is heard or lightning is seen\*, the leading edge of the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Suspend play for at least 30 minutes and vacate the outdoor activity to the previously designated safer location 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 deciding to suspend play if a lightning strike is noted to be within **6 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.