



## SEVERE WEATHER/THOR-GUARD

- I. PURPOSE:** Lightning is an act of nature that kills approximately 10 people in Illinois each year, and approximately 85 people annually throughout the United States. To decrease the possibility for such events, the following procedures have been established.
- II. THOR-GUARD SYSTEM:** The Bartlett Park District has installed and will maintain a Lightning Prediction System (Thor-Guard). The system consists of sensors that measure electrostatic charges at ground level and in the atmosphere. These electrostatic charges, invisible to the naked eye, build prior to lightning occurrences. Thor-Guard is located at two Park District locations:
1. Apple Orchard Community Park with alarm horns and strobe lights located at Apple Orchard Golf Course Clubhouse and Bartlett Aquatic Center. Included within the system's range will be Apple Orchard Community Park – both east and west sides.
  2. Koehler Athletic Fields with alarm horn and strobe lights on the concession building. Included within the system's range are all athletic fields.

When conditions indicate that a lightning occurrence is probable, a signal is sent to the alarm horns and strobe lights. The system will be operational from late March to mid-November, seven days per week, from 6:00am to 11:00pm.

The best way to manage lightning, thunder, and related severe weather conditions is to be aware in advance of changing weather conditions, coupled with sound judgment and prompt implementation of lightning procedures.

- A. WARNING SIGNAL:** A warning signal (**one long 15 second horn blast**) will sound and strobe lights will activate when a potentially dangerous weather situation is approaching. The strobe lights are mounted on the top of the Aquatic Center, Golf Course Clubhouse, and the concession building at Koehler Athletic Fields. If a park user arrives and they see that the strobe lights are activated, a potentially dangerous weather situation exists and they should take appropriate precautions.
- B. ALL-CLEAR SIGNAL:** The all-clear signal (**3 short horn blasts, 2 seconds apart**) will sound, and the strobe lights will deactivate. After the "all clear" signal sounds and the strobe lights deactivate, park patrons may resume their activities.
- C. CAUTION:** The Thor-Guard System is designed to help assess conditions. Neither the signal nor the system is intended to guarantee that conditions are safe. If the weather is threatening and no warning signal is heard or seen, park patrons should use good judgment and clear the fields, golf course, playground, etc. Park users should not wait for the warning signal to activate, as the system can malfunction.



- D. LIGHTNING IS SEEN, BUT THOR-GUARD HAS *NOT* SOUNDED:** If lightning is spotted or thunder is heard, even if the Thor-Guard Lightning Prediction System **has not** sounded, all activities will cease immediately and fields will be cleared, regardless of how far away you might consider the lightning to be. In this case, the rule is: wait 30 minutes to see if the conditions improve. There must be a 30 minute period free of lightning/thunder before play can resume. *Example:* Lightning strikes or thunder occurs, the clock starts; 15 minutes later, lightning strikes or thunder is heard again, then the clock is reset and you wait another 30 minutes, and so on, before play can resume.
- E. FIELDS WITHOUT THOR-GUARD:** For those fields that do not have Thor-Guard, we are relying on coaches/parents/staff to be aware of conditions and cease play immediately when lightning is spotted or thunder is heard. Again, in this case the rule is: wait 30 minutes to see if the conditions improve. There must be a 30 minute period free of lightning or thunder before play can resume. *Example:* Lightning strikes or thunder occurs, the clock starts; 15 minutes later lightning strikes or thunder is heard again, then the clock is reset and you wait another 30 minutes, and so on, before play can resume.

***PARK PATRONS NOT OBEYING THE WARNING SIGNAL AND/OR STROBE LIGHTS DO SO AT THEIR OWN RISK. SERIOUS INJURY OR DEATH MAY RESULT.***

### **III. PROCEDURES WHEN THE THOR-GUARD SYSTEM SOUNDS:**

The following procedures are to be followed when potentially dangerous weather exists:

#### **A. APPLE ORCHARD COMMUNITY PARK & KOEHLER FIELDS:**

1. If the Thor-Guard warning signal sounds, all activities in the park will end immediately and patrons must leave the park.
2. It is recommended that park patrons seek shelter in their cars, under lightning- safe shelters within the park, or in a building. Patrons should avoid areas that are higher than the surrounding landscape, they should not use a tree for shelter, and they should keep away from metal objects such as bicycles, umbrellas, chain-link fences, metal bats, golf clubs, etc. They should also get away from the pond and/or pooling water.
3. All park patrons must wait until the Lightning Prediction System performs an “all clear” signal before commencing activities in the park.