

# STANDARDIZED OPERATING PROCEDURE

## Recreation and Parks

<b>Unit: DEPARTMENT WIDE</b>	
<b>No. # DW03</b>	<b>Title: SEVERE WEATHER POLICY</b>
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<b>Effective Date: 3/4/2010</b>	<b>Last Revised Date: 7/25/2023</b>

- **Purpose**

- Establish procedure to promote the safety of program participants during occurrences of severe weather.

- **Scope/Definition(s)**

The following areas are addressed by this policy:

- Removal of participants and spectators from athletic fields during occurrences of lightning
- Building closures during inclement weather
- Warnings for additional severe weather including excessive heat and high winds.

- **Responsibilities**

- It is the responsibility of Recreation and Parks staff and their designees (including volunteers) to notify program participants regarding severe weather and necessary actions.

- **Procedure**

- **THUNDER & LIGHTNING:** Once observed or heard, all athletic fields and outdoor organized program areas must be cleared for a period of 30 minutes. If observed or heard again, the 30-minute period begins again.

- SNOW: When schools are closed/close early due to inclement weather or if school activities are closed due to inclement weather, all recreation and parks activities for that day are cancelled. For weekend activities, if the snow emergency plan is in effect after 8 pm Friday or anytime Saturday, all Saturday activities are cancelled. If the snow emergency plan is in effect after 8 pm Saturday or anytime Sunday, all Sunday activities are cancelled. This includes activities that occur at school sites, nature centers, New Windsor Community Room, South Carroll Senior & Community Center and the Robert Moton Center.
- WIND: When a high wind warning is issued by the National Weather Service (NWS), outdoor activities shall not operate within close proximity of trees, power lines and other potential hazards. The NWS defines a high wind warning as sustained wind speeds of 40 mph or greater lasting for 1 hour or longer or 58 mph or greater for any duration of time.
- HEAT: Approximately 30 minutes prior to the start of the activity, temperature and heat index reading should be taken at the site or from [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com) or a comparable source. The following are recommended guidelines for coaches, program leaders and volunteers to follow with regards to Department sponsored **youth** activities:
  - Heat Index – 80-89: Use caution, monitor athletes carefully for necessary action.
  - Heat Index 90-104: Use extreme caution; remove helmets and other equipment if not involved in contact.
  - Heat Index 105-129: Alter uniforms by removing items where feasible; practice time should be shortened with low intensity & limited conditioning.
  - Heat Index 130 & above: No practice or games. Activities should be rescheduled for early/late in day or an alternative date when heat index is lower,
  - NOTE: Some discretion is granted to the volunteers in making this decision as programs may be occurring at sites with abundant shade, water & varying breezes. In all cases, once the heat index rises above 105, programs should allow for frequent cooling breaks, reduced activity levels and mandatory water breaks of 10 minutes in duration every 30 minutes.
- EXTREME COLD TEMPERATURES: Department sponsored youth activities:
  - Temperatures above 32 degrees: no restrictions
  - Temperatures between 13 – 31 degrees: Indoor breaks every 20-30 minutes
  - Temperature or wind chill is below 13 degrees: No outdoor activities; Wind chill may be calculated by entering temperature and wind speed at [www.weather.gov/epz/wxcalc\\_windchill](http://www.weather.gov/epz/wxcalc_windchill)
- AIR QUALITY (AQI Color), AirNow, Department sponsored activities:

- **GREEN:** Good, values of index, 0-50. Air quality is satisfactory, and air pollution poses little or no risk.
- **YELLOW:** Moderate, values of index 51-100. Air quality is acceptable. However, there may be a risk for some people, particularly those who are unusually sensitive to air pollution.
- **ORANGE:** Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups, values of index 101-150. Members of sensitive groups may experience health effects. The general public is less likely to be affected. For practices, take more breaks and do fewer intensive activities. Watch for symptoms and take action as needed.
- **RED:** Unhealthy, values of index 151-200. Some members of the general public may experience health effects; members of sensitive groups may experience more serious health effects. Take longer breaks or move activities inside. Watch for symptoms and take action as needed.
- **PURPLE:** Very Unhealthy, values of index 201-300. Health alert. The risk of health effects is increased for everyone. Move indoors or reschedule outdoor activities.
- **MAROON:** Hazardous, values of index 301 and higher. Health warning of emergency conditions: everyone is more likely to be affected. Move indoors or reschedule outdoor activities.

- **References**

- [www.airnow.gov](http://www.airnow.gov)
- For further information, email [ccrec@carrollcountymd.gov](mailto:ccrec@carrollcountymd.gov) or call 410-386-2103