

MGAA Thunderstorm & Lightning Safety Plan

ADAPTED FROM RECOMMENDED LIGHTNING SAFETY PROCEDURES
FROM NOAA

In general, a significant lightning threat extends outward from the base of a thunderstorm cloud about 6 to 10 miles. Therefore, people should move to a safe place when a thunderstorm is 6 to 10 miles away. In order to keep riders, ponies and spectators safe at MGAA competitions, the following procedures are recommended –

If possible, one person should be designated as a storm spotter, whose main responsibility is to monitor the weather conditions for approaching storms.

If possible, have a NOAA Weather or Alert Radio turned on in the announcer's booth. (Many brands available)

Activities should be stopped and ponies and riders directed to move to safety immediately if -

- Lightning is seen. The ability to see lightning varies depending on the time of day, weather conditions, and obstructions such as trees, mountains, etc. In clear air, and especially at night, lightning can be seen from storms more than 10 miles away provided that obstructions don't limit the view of the thunderstorm.
- Thunder is heard. Thunder can usually be heard for a distance of about 10 miles provided that there is no background noise. Traffic, wind, and precipitation may limit the ability to hear thunder to less than 10 miles. If you hear thunder, though, it's a safe bet that the storm is within ten miles.
- The sky looks threatening. In addition to any of the above criteria, activities should be halted if the sky looks threatening. Thunderstorms can develop directly overhead and some storms may develop lightning just as they move into an area.

Definition of a safe place -

Fully enclosed buildings with wiring and plumbing provide the best protection. Sheds, picnic shelters, tents or covered porches do not protect you from lightning. If a sturdy building is not nearby, get into a hard-topped metal vehicle and close all the windows.

The organizer should determine in advance where the riders and ponies should be directed, whether it be back to the barns or to an enclosed indoor arena.

Outdoor activities may be resumed 30 minutes after the last rumble of thunder is heard.

If someone is struck

Lightning-strike victims carry no electrical charge and should be helped immediately. Anyone who has been hit by lightning requires immediate professional medical care. Call 9-1-1 and begin CPR immediately if the person has stopped breathing. Use an Automatic External Defibrillator if one is available.