

## SEVERE WEATHER GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

**MISSION:** The City of Alpharetta Recreation, Parks and Cultural Services Department (“ARPCS”) strives to promote the highest quality recreation programs and park facilities to our citizens consistent with our core values of Excellence, Stewardship, Integrity, Service, and Loyalty.

**PURPOSE:** ARPCS' Severe Weather Guidelines and Procedures were established to protect all park patrons (participants, officials, employees, and the general public) from the dangers of storms and hazardous weather conditions. Certain weather conditions can pose risk but proper planning assures that potential severe weather situations are handled appropriately.

Education and effective communication of severe weather procedures are critical to ensuring the safety of everyone at risk. Park patrons should be aware of and adhere to safety practices and guidelines established by ARPCS.

Some of the most common severe weather conditions are:

- Thunderstorms and Lightning storms
- TORNADOS – watches and warnings
- Hot Weather – risks of dehydration, heat exhaustion or heat strokes, sunburns
- Cold Weather - hypothermia

**THUNDERSTORMS, LIGHTNING STORMS, AND TORNADOS:** During certain times of the year, thunderstorms, lightning storms and tornados pose a frequent threat in Georgia. Recognizing the danger and knowing what to do and where to go for safe shelter can protect lives. The City of Alpharetta has a warning system in place to alert park patrons of the threat of tornados: ARPCS City of Alpharetta Emergency Warning System.

### **Procedures to follow when a severe weather alert siren sounds:**

1. Clear the area (field, rink, pool, playground, trail, picnic pavilion, etc.) immediately.
2. Seek shelter in a building or in a vehicle.
3. Stay sheltered and do not resume activities until the “All-Clear” is given.

### **Where Should People Go For Safe Shelter?**

There is no place outside that is safe in or near a thunderstorm, lightning storm, or tornado. Therefore, people need to immediately stop what they are doing and get to a safe place. Small outdoor structures such dugouts, picnic pavilions, sheds, etc. are NOT SAFE.

Substantial buildings with wiring and plumbing provide the greatest amount of protection. In the absence of a substantial building, a hard-topped metal vehicle with the windows closed provides good protection. While buildings and vehicles are not 100% safe from lightning, they do offer the best protection from a lightning strike.

### **Alpharetta's Emergency Warning System**

The City of Alpharetta operates an emergency warning system designed to alert citizens to impending natural or man-made emergencies that could affect the health and/or safety of its citizens. The system is comprised of 23 sirens strategically located throughout the City. When activated, these sirens revolve 360-degrees so the sound can be projected in all directions. The City's Department of Public Safety conducts a one-minute audible test of the siren system on the first Wednesday of the month at 12 noon. If weather conditions are poor then the test will occur on Wednesday of the following week at 12 noon. Shorter 30-second non-scheduled tests may occur to facilitate testing and maintenance.

Alpharetta Department of Public Safety will activate the warning sirens when one or more of the four conditions listed below are met. For weather related emergencies, the sirens will be activated for 3 minutes, followed by a short pause, then activated an additional 3 minutes. This pattern will continue until the weather related threat has passed. For National Security or local hazardous events, the sirens will be activated as needed to ensure proper notification of the affected area.

### **Alpharetta Fire and Emergency Services will sound the warning sirens for three minutes when:**

1. A public safety official or duty officer determines that a severe thunderstorm warning with winds of 80 mph and hail of 2.5" poses a threat to the health, safety, and property of city residents.
2. The National Weather Service issues a tornado warning for the North Fulton Area.
3. When a funnel cloud, tornado, or dangerous and damaging winds are spotted by a trained spotter (Fire Department or Police Department member).
4. National Security or local hazardous emergency event occurs which requires immediate evacuation (instructions will follow via local news media).

Once the warning sirens are activated, people should seek shelter immediately and follow the procedures noted above.



**HOT WEATHER:** ARPCS has established Hydration and Heat Guidelines. When outdoor air temperature and humidity can be extreme, ARPCS will enforce the following guidelines for all outdoor activities. These guidelines may include frequency of water breaks and practice/game cancellations. Outdoor activities must be canceled if the WBGT (Wet Bulb Globe Temperature) is over 92 degrees. ARPCS officials and representatives have the authority to enforce these guidelines.

General hydration guidelines:

- Coaches shall inform all parents that it is their responsibility to provide ice water and ice towels for both practices and games.
- Coaches shall inform all participants that water is always available or accessible and they will be given permission anytime he/she asks for water.
- Before Practice/Game – drink early 17 – 20 oz of water or diluted sport drink 2-3 hours before and an additional 7-10 oz 10 – 20 minutes before
- During Practice/Game – drink early, drink often 7- 10 oz every 10 – 20 minutes depending on heat and humidity. Caution players to drink at each break and not to wait until they are thirsty. Assign a coach to monitor time intervals between each water break.
- After Practice/Game – drink enough fluids to replace any weight loss within two hours of completion. General heat guidelines:

- ❑ Give adequate rest periods. Remove appropriate equipment when possible as exposed skin cools more efficiently.
- ❑ Gradually acclimatize participants to the heat. Encourage athletes and parents to spend time in the heat to start the acclimatization process
- ❑ Athletes who need careful monitoring include:
  - Overweight athletes
  - Those taking over-the-counter and prescription medication
  - Those that don't exercise on a regular basis

## Preventing Heat & Cold Related Emergencies

- Avoid being outdoors in the hottest or coldest part of the day
- Change your activity level according to the temperature
- Take frequent breaks
- Dress appropriately for the environment
- Drink large amounts of fluids before, during, and after activity

### WET BULB TEMPERATURE CHART

The different stages will be numbered as levels 1-5. These are guidelines for outdoor practice/games.

<b>RISK LEVEL</b>	<b>FAHRENHEIT WBT</b>	<b>CELSIUS WBT</b>	<b>PRACTICE/ GAME LENGTH</b>	<b>BREAKS</b>	<b>FLUIDS</b>
1 Low Risk	72° and Lower	22° and Lower	As Scheduled	As Needed	As Desired
2 Moderate Risk	73° -80°	23° - 26°	As Scheduled	5 Minute Break Every 30-35 Minutes	Cold Water
3 High Risk	81° -88°	27° - 31°	Use Caution	5 Minute Break Every 20-25 Minutes	Cold Water
4 Extremely High Risk	89° -92°	32° - 34°	Practice/Game Time Should Be Shortened with Low Intensity Activity	5 Minute Break Every 15 Minutes	Cold Water and Wet Towels
5 Exceedingly High Risk	92° and above	35° and Above	Cancel Practice	Cancel Practice/Game	Cancel Practice/Game

## HEAT AFFLICTION SYMPTOMS AND TREATMENTS

Recommendations from the National Athletic Trainers Association  
July 1999

<u>Heat Affliction</u>	<u>Symptoms</u>	<u>Treatment</u>
<u>Heat Cramps</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Muscle spasms caused by an imbalance of water and electrolytes in muscles</li><li>-Usually affects the legs and abdominal muscles</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Rest in a cool place</li><li>-Drink plenty of fluids</li><li>-Proper stretching and massaging</li><li>-Application of ice in some cases</li></ul>
<u>Heat Exhaustion</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Can be precursor to heat stroke</li><li>-Normal to high temperature</li><li>-Heavy sweating</li><li>-Skin is flushed or cool and pale</li><li>-Headaches, dizziness</li><li>-Rapid pulse, nausea, weakness</li><li>-Physical collapse may occur</li><li>-Can occur without prior symptoms, such as cramps</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Get to a cool place immediately and out of the heat</li><li>-Drink plenty of fluids</li><li>-Remove excess clothing</li><li>-In some cases, immerse body in cool water</li></ul>
<u>Heat Stroke</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Body's cooling system shuts down</li><li>-Increased core temperature of 104°F or greater</li><li>-If untreated it can cause brain damage, internal organ damage, and even death</li><li>-Sweating stops</li><li>-Shallow breathing and rapid pulse</li><li>-Possible disorientation or lose consciousness</li><li>-Possible irregular heartbeat and cardiac arrest</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Call 911 immediately</li><li>-Cool bath with ice packs near large arteries, such as neck, armpits, groin</li><li>-Replenish fluids by drinking or intravenously if needed</li></ul>

### NATA FLUID REPLACEMENT GUIDELINES DURING EXERCISE

1. Drink 16-24oz. of fluid 1 or 2 hours before the workout or competition.
2. Drink 4-8oz. of water or sports drink during every 20 minutes of exercise.
3. Drink before thirst develops. Thirst indicates that needed fluids are already lost.

### NATA FLUID REPLACEMENT GUIDELINES AFTER EXERCISE

#### Weight Lost During Workout

2 pounds  
4 pounds  
6 pounds  
8 pounds

#### Fluid Amount Needed to Refuel

32oz. (4 cups or one sports drink bottle)  
64oz. (8 cups or two bottles)  
96oz. (12 cups or three bottles)  
128oz. (16 cups or four bottles)

COLD WEATHER: Risk of hypothermia, frostbite and injury from numbness are avoidable. If the official Alpharetta, GA temperature according to [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com) is forecasted to be 30 degrees or lower at the time of the scheduled outdoor practice, game, or activity, it is recommended that the scheduled event be cancelled. If the temperature reaches 25 degrees, it is mandatory that the event be cancelled. ARPD officials and representatives have the authority to enforce these guidelines.

EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION: ARPCS officials and representatives are responsible to communicate severe weather guidelines and procedures to park patrons. ARPCS' Severe Weather Guidelines and Procedures are posted on the City of Alpharetta website, [www.alpharetta.ga.us/recreation](http://www.alpharetta.ga.us/recreation). The guidelines are referenced in the following documents: ARPD Athletic Handbook, ARPCS Ambush Coaching Manual, and ARPCS' Youth Athletic Association Guidelines provided to partner youth athletic association board members. Severe Weather Early Warning System Audible and Visual Legend signage is posted in various park locations to educate park patrons on the warning systems utilized by the City of Alpharetta.

