

**DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**  
**Texas Department of Public Safety**

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*For Immediate Release:*

**SEVERE WEATHER AWARENESS WEEK:  
DELAY THE GAME WHEN THUNDERSTORMS  
APPROACH**

Austin, TX – The Division of Emergency Management, Texas Department of Public Safety warns the public that sports fields are dangerous during thunderstorms.

Sports fields are large, open areas where people are often the tallest objects. Metal bleachers, fences, light poles and goal posts attract lightning. When lightning hits these objects, the charge travels along the object, potentially injuring anyone in contact with the metal. Lightning can bounce off any of these objects and strike people nearby.

Schools, athletic programs, day care centers and summer camps, as well as coaches, referees and parents participating in field events need to understand the dangers of lightning. They should be prepared to suspend games and move the players and spectators inside nearby buildings or into cars and buses until the storm threat passes.

The Division of Emergency Management offers the following lightning safety tips.

- ✓ If you can hear thunder, you are close enough to be struck by lightning.
- ✓ If you are outdoors with no shelter available, stay low.
- ✓ Move away from hills and high places, and avoid tall, isolated trees.
- ✓ Do not touch metal objects, such as tennis rackets, baseballs bats or golf clubs.
- ✓ Do not ride bicycles, or lean against fences or metal sheds.
- ✓ Do not lean against a car or truck – get inside the vehicle quickly.
- ✓ If you feel your hair suddenly stands on end, it means you may be a lightning target. Crouch low on the balls of your feet and try not to touch the ground with your knees or hands.
- ✓ Avoid wet areas that can conduct the lightning charge.

For more information, contact Mary Lenz or William Ayres at (512) 424-2138 or visit DEM's Web site: [www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem](http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem).