



OFFICE OF  
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

## VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD

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### **IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT LIGHTNING DETECTION SYSTEM**

The Village of Ridgewood maintains a Lightning Detection System at several athletic fields throughout the village. The system is managed by the Office of Emergency Management (OEM), and governed by the Athletic Fields and Recreational Facilities Use Policy as established by the Department of Parks and Recreation's Fields Use Committee and the Board of Education.

An effective lightning safety program is dependent on cooperation by field users, as well as properly functioning technology. We realize compliance with the Lightning Detection System will increase once residents and other users of our facilities understand how the system works and what to do when there is a threat of lightning.

OEM and the Fields Use Committee are providing this summary about the Lightning Detection System to educate the public about the system and current policies.

#### **Current Locations With Lightning Detection System**

- Ridgewood High School/Stevens Field
- Veterans Field
- Maple Field
- Benjamin Franklin Middle School
- Somerville School
- Hawes School

#### **Future Locations Not Currently Covered By Lightning Detection System**

- George Washington Middle School/Citizens' Field
- Habernickel Park
- Kenilworth Field
- Brookside Field
- Glen School
- Orchard School
- Willard School
- Ridge School

- Travell School

### How the Lightning Detection System Works

- Each field is equipped with a rotating amber beacon (flashing light) and a siren.
- When the system detects a lightning strike within 10 miles, a text/email alert will be sent to anyone registered to receive electronic alerts (see below for more information). Within approximately one minute, the siren will sound for 15 seconds and the amber light will illuminate and rotate. The amber light will remain on for the duration of the alert (the siren will not sound again until the “all clear” signal is sounded).
- Once 30 minutes have passed with no lightning detected in the 10 mile area, an “all clear” signal will be broadcast.
  - **Important: Do not assume it is safe to return to the field after 30 minutes. The system tracks ALL lightning strikes within a 10- mile radius, but only activates after the first strike. There may be multiple consecutive strikes occurring. The system will only sound the “all clear” 30 minutes after the LAST lightning strike. In other words, the “all clear” may sound well beyond 30 minutes from activation. Wait until the “all-clear” signal is given before returning to the field.**
- The “all clear” signal consists of three 5-second alerts on the siren and the amber light will shut off. The system will also send out an “all clear” text message and email.
- The system is active from 8am until 10pm, consistent with the hours the fields are open for use.
- The Lightning Detection System is an additional tool to provide warning of potential lightning strikes. If the system does not activate but you see lightning or hear thunder, clear the field immediately and seek shelter.

### What to Do When the System is Activated

- While the alert is active **the field is closed and users should seek immediate shelter**. A safe shelter includes any building (grounded or with plumbing) or any vehicle with a metal roof.
- Anyone arriving to use a field should check to see if the light is active, especially if it looks like others have left the field.
- Encourage others to leave the field and seek immediate shelter.
- Wait for the “all clear” signal before returning to the field. Remember: it may take longer than 30 minutes for the “all clear” to be given.

### Your Obligation to Comply

- Rules for complying with the Lightning Detection System are posted at the fields.
- All field users have an obligation to comply with the alerts by immediately vacating the field and seeking shelter. This includes coaches, parents, referees/umpires. It applies equally to organized sports activities as well as casual field users.
- The safety of all participants, especially children, is of paramount importance. Lightning kills and heeding the alerts could be a matter of life or death.

### **What to Do at Location with No Lightning Detection System**

- If you see lightning or hear thunder, clear the field immediately and seek shelter.
- Wait 30 minutes from the last lightning strike or sound of thunder before returning to the field.
- Use common sense.

### **Register for Receive Lightning Alerts by Text/Email**

- Residents are encouraged to sign up to receive email and/or text alerts directly from the Lightning Detection System. These electronic alerts serve as a redundant system in the event the sirens or rotating beacons are not functioning. They also serve to alert parents who are not present at the field but may have children that are on the field.
- **2 ways to register for email/text alerts**
  - Visit [www.ridgewoodnj.net](http://www.ridgewoodnj.net) and click on “E-Notice sign up” or
  - Visit <http://oem.ridgewoodnj.net> and either click on “Register for Notifications” under the News & Information tab or click on the “Swift 911 Notification” icon
  - Be sure to check the box that says “Lightning Detection Email Alerts”

### **Notify Us of System Problems**

- The Village of Ridgewood has a dedicated email address to report problems with the Lightning Detection System. To report a problem or if you believe the system is not functioning properly, please send an email to [LDSinfo@ridgewoodnj.net](mailto:LDSinfo@ridgewoodnj.net).