

# City of Oberlin

85 South Main St. Oberlin, OH 44074

Public Works Department

## LIGHTNING PREDICTION AND WARNING SYSTEM

### What It Is and How It Works

The City of Oberlin has recently installed a lightning detection system at the Oberlin Recreation Complex on W. Hamilton Street. A sensor is mounted on the roof of the storage building on the east end of the parking lot. The sensor monitors and evaluates changes in electrical energy. When the danger of a lightning strike increases, the sensor triggers the warning system. The warning system includes a strobe light mounted on the storage building and a strobe light and siren mounted on the left field foul pole of Field #4. The siren is oriented east/west with an audible range of approximately ½ mile in either direction.

The system works by continuously monitoring changes of positively and negatively charged ions in the atmosphere and comparing those patterns to a computer model to predict the likelihood of lightning strikes. The sensor tracks shifts in electrical energy nine miles in all directions. The warning system is triggered to 'Red Alert' when a lightning strike within 1¼ miles of the Recreation Complex is likely to occur. This system is designed to give 8 to 10 minutes advance warning of probable lightning strikes in and around the Recreation Complex fields. Although the sensor tracks continuously, the alarm system is set to go off only between the hours of 7 a.m. and 11 p.m.

### What You Should Do

The Red Alert signal is one fifteen (15) second horn blast accompanied by the strobe lights on the building and at the foul pole. The strobe lights will continue to flash while the conditions for a local lightning strike are prevalent. When the Red Alert is sounded:

### **Seek Shelter Immediately**

Umpires, referees and coaches have the responsibility of stopping play or practice immediately. Shelter may be found in the dug-outs (avoid contact with the fence), in and around the Concession Stand/Restroom Facility, in vehicles in the parking lots and in Pavilion(s) to be constructed on site. If you remain outdoors after the warning is issued, you do so at your own risk.

The system will continue to monitor the probability of lightning strikes in the immediate vicinity. When the probability is sufficiently reduced, the 'All Clear' signal is sounded. The All Clear signal is three, five (5) second horn blasts. Following the 'All Clear' signal, normal activities may resume.

If you have questions about the system, please contact Parks staff on-site or by calling 774-1994 or 775-7252.