

Lower Long Lake Lightning Emergency Action Plan for 2026 Manitou Monster Swim

I. Monitoring Weather

- a. Designate a weather watcher to monitor for severe weather and lightning each day: Independent Safety Officer, Christine Mohr
- b. Weather watcher reviews available forecasts:
 - i. National Weather Service (NWS) watches, warnings and advisories at
<https://forecast.weather.gov/MapClick.php?CityName=New+Auburn&state=WI&site=MPX&textField1=45.1981&textField2=-91.565&e=0>
 - ii. Thunderstorms and severe weather forecasts are also online at
<http://www.spc.noaa.gov>.
 - iii. Watch: conditions are favorable for severe weather to develop.
 - iv. Warning: severe weather has been detected and may be imminent to the locale.
 - v. **Questions about a storm: contact the National Weather Service in Twin Cities/Chanhassen at 952-361-6670.**
- c. Communication of weather hazards:
 - i. Weather watcher notifies Meet Director, Meet Referee and Staff (lifeguard supervisor).
 - ii. Staff notify the public of the weather forecast (e.g., via information boards, PA announcements, multimedia notification).
- d. Tools to monitor weather:
 - i. Weather apps such as NWS, NOAA, etc.
 - ii. Flash-to-Bang Rule: Start counting the seconds when a lightening flash is noted and stop counting at sound of related thunder. The number of seconds is then divided by five (5) to determine the proximity in miles of the lightning (5 seconds ÷ 5 = 1 mile; 50 seconds ÷ 5 = 10 miles, etc.).

II. Appropriate Shelters During Lightening/Thunderstorms

- a. Fully enclosed substantial buildings that have grounded wiring and plumbing. (Morris-Erickson County Park Shelter, Max's on the Lake Bar and Grill, 0.5 mile from starting line)
- b. Fully enclosed metal vehicles (no soft-top convertibles): do not touch the metal framework during the thunderstorm. 35 ft motor home on site, along with multiple personal vehicles

III. Locations That Do Not Offer Protection from Lighting

- a. Beaches and water.
- b. Open-sided pavilions (such as picnic areas).
- c. Restrooms, changing facilities/locker rooms and showers.
- d. Tents or umbrellas.
- e. Small personal watercraft (such as jet skis, kayaks).
- f. Boats that are not designed or retrofitted to be compliant with NFPA 780 lightning guidelines.
- g. If no protection from lightning is available, stay away from the tallest objects (lifeguard stands, light poles, flag poles), metal objects (fences or bleachers), standing pools of water, and open areas.

IV. Lightening Threat Level 1: Lightening Detected Within 20 Miles

- a. Weather watcher: notify meet management and staff.
- b. If it appears the thunderstorm is moving towards the site:
 - i. A 30-minute or more lead time is optimal for protective actions.
 - ii. Contact the National Weather Service, Twin Cities/Chanhassen MN at 952-361-6670 for an estimate of the speed and direction of the storm's movement and to determine when/if it will enter a 10-mile radius of the venue.
- c. Protective actions:
 - i. Consider closing facilities that do not provide protection from lightning.
 - ii. Consider initiating predetermined evacuation plans
 - 1. Warn lifeguards of the potential need to evacuate the water.
 - 2. Warn beach public, coaches, athletes, officials of the potential need to evacuate the beach area. Ensure staff take action to protect themselves.
 - iii. If the NWS predicts the storm will arrive within 30 minutes or less:
 - 1. All athletes, officials and safety personnel return to shore.**
 - 2. Account for athletes that have exited the water.**
 - 3. Leave and find appropriate shelter.
- d. Resumption of in-water activities:
 - i. The beach remains closed, and no one may return to the sand until 30 minutes after the LAST strike of lightning is spotted or thunder is heard.

- ii. Public, athletes and coaches may return to the beach when notified by the Meet Management and Independent Safety Officer.
- iii. The Meet Referee, Meet Director and ISO shall determine how and when the in-water activities will continue.

V. Lightening Threat Level 2: Lightening Detected Within 15 Miles

- a. Same as for Threat Level 1 a-d, **EXCEPT: exit the water and initiate evacuation plans.**
- b. Lake evacuation protocol:
 - i. Meet Director, Meet Referee and/or ISO to communicate with the officials and safety personnel to evacuate the water.
 - ii. Lifeguards to initiate whistle protocol
 - iii. Lifeguards, Officials and Safety Personnel on the water to direct and assist athletes to the nearest shoreline or to the beach.
 - iv. Once out of the water, athletes are directed to return to the beach or to the Campground shelter, whichever is closer. At least one official should assist and account for athletes at the beach.
 - v. Officials and Assigned Volunteers to assist in verification of athlete count as they leave the water and verify with Officials on the beach and with the Administrative Referee.
 - vi. Verify that all on-water lifeguards, safety personnel and officials have been evacuated from the lake.
 - vii. Once on shore, seek appropriate lightning/thunderstorm shelter.

VI. Lightening Threat Level 3: Lightening Detected Within 10 Miles

- a. **Same fundamentals as with Threat Levels 1 and 2, EXCEPT:**
 - i. Close facilities that do not provide protection from lightning.
 - ii. Notify athletes, officials, staff, volunteers and spectators of imminent threat.
 - iii. Immediately initiate evacuation protocol as listed for Threat Level 2.
- b. Resumption of in-water activities:
 - i. The beach remains closed, and no one may return to the sand until 30 minutes after the LAST strike of lightning is spotted or thunder is heard, and Thor Guard indicates all clear.
 - ii. Public, athletes and coaches may return to the beach when notified by the Meet Management and Independent Safety Officer.
 - iii. The Meet Referee, Meet Director and ISO shall determine how and when the in-water activities will continue.

VII. Lightning Injury Response

- a. Ensure scene safety (victims do not carry an electrical charge and can be touched).
- b. Summon an ambulance, follow local protocols for trauma injury and triage.
- c. If necessary, safe, and appropriate, move the victim to a safe place away from the threat of another lightning strike.
- d. Heart irregularities, shock, or sudden loss of consciousness are possible. CPR and/or AED may be necessary.
- e. Keep the conscious victim calm and monitor closely.

VIII. All Clear

- a. The weather watcher/ISO will continue to monitor the proximity of thunderstorms and utilize local observations to make an informed decision.
- b. The Meet Director, Meet Referee and ISO will determine the appropriate time to reopen the venue: no lightning strikes within a 10-mile radius for 30 minutes after the last detected strike and all clear given by the Thor Guard system.
- c. The Meet Referee and Meet Director will determine the process of resuming in-water activities.

Originally written by George Geanon,
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Edited and Modified by Event Director Pam Ogden for 2026 Manitou Monster Lake Swim
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