

ASAP news



Continuing the Little League tradition of making it "safer for the kids."

Send in Safety Plans!

If you haven't sent in your safety plan for 2005, there is still time to finish it and get it in the mail! While the deadline was May 1, safety plans may still be sent in now, reflecting how they have increased safety for their participants for this year.

Until Little League has completed processing the safety plans received, plans will still be accepted for the player accident insurance credit. However, late plans may not receive full credit. But either way, your league will benefit from the efforts you have put in place to make it a safer environment for everyone!

The Little League website has all the material leagues received on the ASAP CD this spring, so if you are missing anything, check at: www.littleleague.org/programs/asap/index.asp for anything you might need to complete your plan.

How can I check my plan?

It is imperative all leagues check Little League's website to see if your plan has been received and approved, or if LLB staff need any further information to approve your credit. This is especially important for leagues with multiple charters. The link is:

<http://www.littleleague.org/programs/asap/plans.asp?cid=5>

13 Requirements to Meet

If you still are trying to pull everything together, here are a few pointers to help. The 13 minimum requirements are listed on the registration form. But here are common issues callers need help with:

PUBLISH and distribute a safety manual to managers/coaches.

Hand out copies of the procedures and

policies your board has approved to help increase safety in your league. Most of the 13 minimum requirements will be addressed and included in this manual.

Post and distribute emergency and key officials' phone numbers. From the ambulance service to the league's player agent, people need to know who to contact after something happens, whether an injury or a concern, and being on the board isn't an anonymous job. Make your phone list available, so issues are resolved quickly.

Use the 2005 Volunteer Application Form and check your volunteers against your state's Sex Offender Registry (SOR).

It's a regulation, so make sure you're getting ALL applicable volunteers checked, at least statewide.

Provide and require fundamentals training, with at least one coach or manager from each team attending. Require coaches/managers to attend at least once every three years.

Ask local resources like the high school ball coaches, or the junior college or college coaches. Most of these people have a sincere desire to be involved and help train young players. And make sure at least one representative is attending each year, and each coach or manager has attended one in the last three years.

Provide and require first aid training for coaches and managers, with at least one coach or manager from each team attending. Require coaches/managers to attend at least once every three years.

It doesn't have to cost money, and it doesn't require certification at the end. Again, make sure at least one representative is attending each year, and

each coach or manager has attended one in the last three years. See pages 2-3 for additional information.

Provide written safety procedures for concession stand; concession manager trained in safe food handling/prep and procedures.

Provide simple, clear procedures for all volunteers to follow when handling and preparing food.

Implement prompt accident reporting and tracking procedures.

Give volunteers one to two days to report any accidents, and make sure you keep copies of accidents and near-misses, so your league can learn from these incidents (At which field are accidents happening? What kinds of injuries are occurring? What ages?)

Require a first-aid kit at each game and practice.

Your league can provide a comprehensive kit at a central site, but each team still needs a first aid kit for immediate and small needs.

These are the ones that we've heard are troublesome, but take heart as you put this together. The 13 requirements will help get your league started on creating a safer environment for all participants: players, volunteers and spectators.

Remember, these are the minimums. If you haven't gone beyond the minimums, ask yourself if you would be content with a "D" on your child's report card? That's the minimum passing grade, right?

Please consider moving past the minimums to develop a comprehensive safety approach that will address all the concerns for a more safe playing experience, from pre-season to All Stars to Training and Development (Fall Ball).

Provide Coaches with

Are You Struggling to Find a Program?

"For the first aid training, I live in a very small town with only volunteer fire fighters and no local doctors or hospitals, none of the volunteer fire fighters are willing to provide training, most of our coaches (who we usually have to beg or put on a guilt trip to coach), will not sit through an 8-hour class put on by the local first aid organization (@ \$500 a session), so I am very much in a bind. Would we be able to purchase training material (video, books, etc) and conduct a meeting with our volunteers for training? Please let me know."

Connie Stevens
- via email

First, we appreciate the difficulty some communities have with putting any training program together. It can be challenging to find responsible people to "step up" and help out. However, the importance of the information outweighs the problems in accomplishing the training. While your league may have been fortunate not to have had a severe injury to a player or your volunteers in general, being prepared is the only defense you have against such an injury.

Little League feels strongly the people attending any training need to have an actual person present it, to ask questions of, whether it be for first aid or fundamentals training. So no, videos or books, while a good resource, will not meet the requirement. On a positive note, understand that the training is not a mandatory certification session. So an 8-hour training, while needed to get CPR certification or first-responder certification, is not required to meet the requirements for a qualified ASAP safety plan. You can decide, with the health care professional doing the training, how long is generally required to meet the need of emergency care for sports-related injuries in your league. A few hours is usually considered sufficient by most leagues.

In finding someone to give the training, most often the people involved with the league have the most vested interest in making sure the players and spectators are safe. So check your parents for a doctor, nurse or other person (athletic trainer, etc.) with the background to explain in common terms what to look for and then do about injuries on and around the field. Knowing they will be educating the people responsible for their child's well-being is usually a terrific motivator in finding a volunteer for this.

This isn't an easy task, but sometimes people don't get involved only because they haven't been asked. Take a look at

the people you have in your league to find someone who meets the requirement to present the information to your league's volunteers. (Please see an outline of the potential material to cover, provided below.)

"What does ASAP require in the Safety Manual to provide evidence that we have complied with the new regulations relating to first aid/CPR and clinics? We have met the threshold required but I'm not sure how to incorporate that proof into my manual. Please advise."

Christine Hochberg
Safety Officer, Monroe-Woodbury
Little League Baseball

You need to show that your league has adopted a mandatory requirement of "one person per team" and "once every three years" for attending these two trainings. It is not necessary to give a list (but you may if you want to show your participation exceeds one per team), but you do need to state the local board requirement/policy for coaches and managers attending these. That should be good enough.

Basics of First Aid Training Outline

Here is an outline for you to follow in preparing your coaches and other volunteers for emergency situations on the field. This will help you put together a quality first aid training class to meet the requirements of first aid training for your coaches and managers. You don't have to follow the specifics of any set program, just get the PRICES – Protection, Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation, and Support (or RICE or PRICE, whatever you use) – idea into participants' heads and talk about the specifics of first aid and injury prevention for specific baseball/softball injuries.

Start with basic terminology (contusion, laceration, etc.), and give the most up-to-date techniques for preventing sports

First Aid Training

Program? You Just Need a Volunteer!

injuries. Help attendees understand and differentiate between mild, moderate and severe injuries and the appropriate actions to take in each category. Teach appropriate first aid techniques for the injuries they will encounter.

Basic issues with baseball/softball would be:

- Contusions
- Muscle pulls and strains
- Over-use injuries
- Sprains
- Fractures
- Injuries to small joints
- Facial injuries
- Injuries to teeth
- Eye injuries
- Insect bites and stings
- Heat illness
- Triage and Emergency Management

Help design an emergency plan for your league when severe injuries occur, and tell the managers/coaches what their role is in that plan:

- Make sure managers/coaches stop all play to protect the player from further injury, as well as those not being closely monitored due to the focus on the injured player.
- Check player's breathing, pulse and alertness to immediately judge the seriousness of the injury:
 - If necessary, send someone to call 9-1-1 or get an ambulance or EMS;
 - Call the player's parents;
 - Send someone to the nearest intersection to direct emergency services to your location;
 - Review the Medical Release form for any important information/warnings about medical conditions the player may have.
- Evaluate the injury:
 - Can the player be moved safely off the field?

- If not, clear area around player and begin examination;
- If so, move player to sideline for closer examination;
- Determine if player can return to play or needs first aid.
- Give the appropriate first aid for the injury.
- Turn over care to professionals when they arrive and help as directed.
- If parents are not available, go with player to treatment center with ambulance; turn over team to authorized coach.
- If emergency medical treatment isn't required, urge player and parents to see a doctor for a proper diagnosis and treatment plan.
- Record the injury on an injury report/accident notification form.
- Follow up with the player until injury is healed and player can return to play.
- Get medical release prior to allowing player to return, if formal treatment was required.

You should have medical professionals available either on-site or at most a phone call away — as well as a method to reach them, by cell phone or phone at the field — for severe or life-threatening injuries.

And finally, help the coaches/managers to understand specific techniques to determine whether an injured player is ready to practice and play again; in some cases this may require a doctor's release. The evaluation process involves determining whether injuries are mild, moderate or severe, and should address what to do in each case. The evaluation includes classifying injuries using symptoms and signs, with appropriate looking, listening and careful feeling and, if appropriate, moving of the injured part.

In evaluating fresh injuries, remember the three types of motion:

- Active motion – player is able to move the part themselves,
- Active assistive motion – player is able to move with a little help from you; watch for warning signs like the player telling you it hurts to move), and
- Passive motion – the player's injured part is moved by someone else; be especially cautious with passive motion that you do not make the injury worse.

Look for disability (the player can't use injured part); this is the most serious injury. If a player sprains his ankle, but can still limp around, it may be mild or moderate; if he can't get up, it is probably severe. Look for swelling, the more immediate and large the swelling, the more serious the injury, because swelling on outside means bleeding on inside. Also, a noticeable deformity means a serious injury. If the body part doesn't look the way it did before the accident, something's wrong. Consider unconsciousness or any eye injury as a serious situation, in the category of severe injuries, until you are assured otherwise by a medical professional.

Use the PRICES guide for treating injuries:

- P** – Protection
- R** – Rest
- I** – Ice
- C** – Compression
- E** – Elevation
- S** – Support

In conclusion, ask for managers/coaches to consider how to prevent injuries:

- Pre-participation health screenings (at least through a health questionnaire/medical release form asking for health concerns and medications);
- Proper maintenance of playing site (game and practice facilities);
- Pay close attention to playing conditions (heat and humidity as well as severe weather);

(Continued on page 5)

Don't Play with Lightning

Second deadliest natural disaster shouldn't surprise your league

" I have been instructed by our board of directors to implement a procedure for lightning strikes. We are in the process of purchasing lightning indicators for our ballparks. Our league wanted to have a procedure in place before we started using the indicators. Do you have any suggestions or parameters that may help? I have not consulted the rulebook as of yet, but that is my next step."

**Jim Lamb, safety officer
Baytown East Little League
(BELL)**

First, in most locations anytime you can see lightning, the storm is close enough to you that you should suspend play, since most sight lines around a given field are less than 5 miles.

You should know that storms can throw lightning up to 10 miles in front of and behind the leading edge of a storm, causing some people to feel the lightning "came out of the clear blue sky". For this reason most leagues use a setting of 3–8 miles on the lightning indicator as the point at which play is halted by the umpire.

Please make sure people in the stands are aware of your policies and can alert umpires to the danger. The umpire is usually concentrating on the game, and may not see the first few strikes as a storm approaches, especially if it comes from behind the field (from the home plate side).

Little League recommends you pull players off the field and have them wait until play resumes or is canceled in the safest location available at this point. In most cases that place will be in their parents' cars with the windows rolled up.

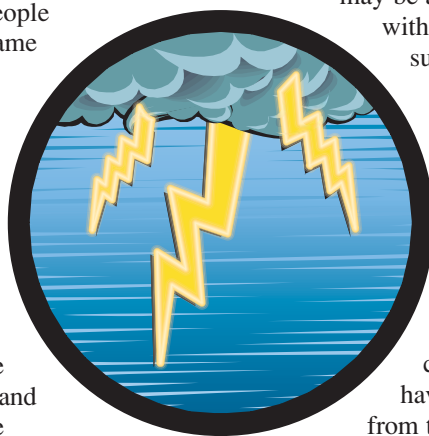
If a building is the best available solution, players need to stay away from anything that pierces the exterior walls, like water lines, metal conduit, etc., to minimize the chance of being electrocuted if the building is struck.

If a player(s) is outside during a lightning storm and they feel the hair on their head stand on end (indicating lightning is about to strike), they should immediately crouch down on the balls of their feet, put their hands over their ears, and bend their head down. Make as small a target as possible and minimize contact with the ground. **Do not lie flat on the ground!**

Whenever the umpire suspends play, usually for 30 minutes to wait to see if

the storm will pass, players (and their parents) should be instructed NOT to leave. When play is disrupted and players leave without notice, it can produce a undesirable situations: a child may be inadvertently left at the field waiting for a ride which may be an hour or more in coming or, alternately, a child may be allowed to leave

without a parent or other supervision. This is not a safe situation. Please remind coaches and managers to always make sure all children are picked up from the field before they leave themselves, and not to give rides to children unless they have specific permission from the player's parents to do so, for the protection of all.



"Many thanks (for the lightning information)! During lunch, I perused past issues of the ASAP Newsletter and found the following in the July '99 issue. I assume that each League is still responsible for developing its own Lightning Policy for now?"

**Robert Studholme,
Safety Officer, Virginia Beach, Va.
Little League**

Editor — Yes, each league needs to establish its own procedures for when to call games. Let's share these articles with all our readers.

Lightning can't create 'storm' with detector

"Last year, we read about the lightning detectors and brought it up at a board meeting. One of the dads is a fireman in town, and he convinced the fire department to buy two of the detectors. They are in our Concession Stand.

"They have ended any question of when a game is suspended because of lightning.

Prepare Coaches for Storms

Last week, during one of the games, the weather looked clear but the wind began blowing. One of the people from the concession came out to tell us, they were picking up lightning 8–20 miles away and it just flashed to 3 to 8 miles.

“We informed the umpire as our procedure states; no sooner did we tell him — the detector beeped again. In the distance we saw a flash of lightning. The umpires immediately suspended play and we moved everyone off the field. In about 20 minutes the storm passed and we were able to resume play.

“The benefit of the lightning detectors for us has made everyone more aware. As soon as we pick up lightning in the 8–20 mile range, managers and umpires are informed. Knowing the distance has caused our managers to take the danger more seriously. Children are quickly moved from the dugouts to cars or concession area for shelter.”

Larry Manetti
Safety Officer, North Riverside Little League
North Riverside, Ill.

“PS — Needless to say we are thankful to our village fire department for the gift.”

‘What are guidelines for lightning?’

“Does Little League Baseball have any guideline to follow when using the SkyScan lightning detector, e.g., when to pull players from the playing field and when is it considered safe to return?”

Gary Burrman
District Safety Officer
Florida District 4

It is up to individual leagues to determine how close a storm should get to your children and what steps they take to protect them.

We know from presentations by the manufacturer of SkyScan that storms can throw lightning 8–10 miles in front of and behind them. Your players are at risk during

this time. Many leagues are looking at the 3–8 mile indicator of lightning’s proximity on when to stop play.

When to allow them back depends largely on how quickly the storm is moving out of the area, and when you no longer have readings of lightning within 10 miles.

Hotline Tip

“One of the things we’re doing is the lightning detector. We’ve set it for anything 10 miles or under, then we shut

down our games. We have our lightning detector in our snack bar and everybody is trained on how to use that. We’re also talking about having a safety day here, with the Flight for Life people and the local paramedics come in and talk about heat exhaustion and heat stroke, things of that nature. Again, thanks for your support.”

Clyde Ravem
Safety Officer, Northern Lights Little League
District 2, Colorado

DID YOU KNOW...

All thunderstorms produce lightning and are dangerous.
Lightning kills more people each year than tornadoes.

You are in danger from lightning if you can hear thunder. If you can hear thunder, lightning is close enough that it could strike your location at any moment.

From the NOAA Lightning Safety Website: www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov

Training Coaches in First Aid Avoids Panic in an Emergency

(continued from page 3)

- Make sure players know basics of good nutrition (especially water replacement on hot days);
- Proper athletic conditioning (stretching, strengthening and endurance, as well as agility and coordination drills);
- Avoid over use (pay special attention to activities outside of Little League, to allow rest to avoid over-use injuries);
- Consistent and proper use of all protective equipment;
- Close coach supervision and organization of warm-ups, practices and games;
- Careful compliance with all Little League rules, especially those having to do with safety.

This summarizes a lot of information into just a few hundred words, so your medical professional going to want to elaborate on all the proper techniques in dealing with the different injury types and how to treat them effectively, as well as what NOT to do in any given circumstances.

And remember, if anyone is ever in doubt to the nature or seriousness of an injury, they should NOT attempt treatment; a health care professional should be consulted immediately.

Finally, remind all managers and coaches to carefully evaluate all injuries and ensure the child does not require professional care.

It’s not worth risking a child’s health just to continue the game.

'Ask Little League'

Read what Little League International Umpire Consultant Andy Konyar had to say about rules, safety and keeping it fun. For the full interview transcript go on-line to: <http://www.littleleague.org/askll/05febsession.asp> Here are outtakes from Andy's on-line interview:

Dan, a local Little League board member in Wylie, Texas, asks:

Maybe this is a question for the legislature instead of the judiciary, but are there any talks about allowing an on-deck circle? I understand the safety reasons, but not having one is one of the issues most complained about in our league.

Andy: The rule prohibiting on-deck batters for 12-and-below divisions was decided upon by the volunteer district administrators at the International Congress (info here: <http://www.littleleague.org/about/congressshistory.asp>), and voted into effect by the International Board of Directors. The reason was not because of players being injured by batted balls. Instead, having the on-deck batter (even behind an enclosure), swinging a bat, resulted in injuries that are now largely eliminated.

Betty, a local Little League president in Sherrill, N.Y., asks:

We have problems every year with the interpretation of the slide or avoid contact rule. Could you please give me an explanation that I can bring to both my coaches and umpires and tell them to live with your recommendation on how that rule should be implemented.

Andy: The key to Rule 7.08 (a)(3) is that the fielder must have the ball AND must be waiting to make a tag. Advise your umpires, managers and coaches that if the defensive player has the ball AND is waiting to make the tag, the offensive player must slide or ATTEMPT to get around the fielder.

Mike, a local Little League manager in Middletown, R.I., asks:

Here's the situation... No outs, runner A on first and runner B on third. Runner A takes off in an attempt to steal second base. Catcher throws to second, and runner B breaks for home as the play is being made on runner A. Catcher calls "time out" after throwing to second base. What happens next?

Andy: Me? I just watch the play. The players can request time out, but only an umpire can grant it, and should never grant it in the middle of a play.

Chip, a local Little League volunteer in Maywood, Ill., asks:

How do we set up umpire certification on the local level?

Andy: Good question, Chip. Little League itself does not have a certification program, but your league can require that umpires attend training sessions (as well as managers and coaches). You can get lots of good info on this and other subjects through the Little League Umpire Registry (info here: <http://www.littleleague.org/umpires/index.asp>).

Rob, a local Little League umpire in Marietta, Ga., asks:

Here's the situation... A batter hits a hard liner past the shortstop that rolls all the way to the wall. The batter/runner, as he passes second base, pulls off his helmet and drops it in the infield as he heads for home and scores. No specific local rule involved. Umpire rules him OUT. Right or wrong?

Andy: Wrong. No Little League rule in any division allows the runner to be called out for removing his/her helmet. You should, however, talk to the manager to ensure his/her players obey basic safety procedures.

Ray, a local Little League umpire-in-chief in Spring Hill, Fla., asks:

How do you handle or what can be done when a batter throws the bat after a hit, striking another player with the thrown bat? I would assume that if done intentionally, it would be unsportsmanlike conduct, but what about the player who just does it as a reflex action?

Andy: I'd talk to that player's manager about it, so the player can be instructed. If it keeps happening, the manager should take the player out of the lineup. There is no rule that allows an umpire to call a batter out for throwing the bat, under any circumstances (even if intentional).

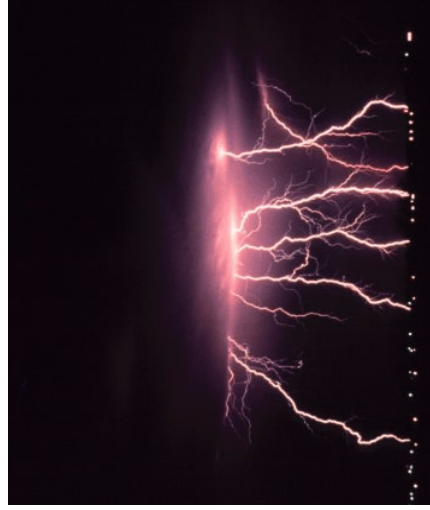
Mary, a local Little League president in Fullerton, Calif., asks:

In the Field Decorum section of the rules it states: "(f) Managers and coaches shall not warm up pitchers." Can you explain what the purpose of this rule is, particularly in the lower divisions? My board feels this is a safety issue in the lower divisions unless the catcher is in full gear. To wait for the catcher to put full gear on delays the game.

Andy: It's a kids' game. It's about players learning different positions, regardless of the division. Players are more able to get out of the way of a low pitch during warm-ups. Your board is right, but the rules do allow the player to warm up the catcher using only the mask/helmet with throat guard.

What to do if someone is struck by lightning

- ▶ **Lightning victims do not carry an electrical charge, are safe to handle, and need immediate medical attention.**
- ▶ **Call for help.** Have someone call 9-1-1 or your local ambulance service. Medical attention is needed as quickly as possible.
- ▶ **Give first aid.** Cardiac arrest is the immediate cause of death in lightning fatalities. However, some deaths can be prevented if the victim receives the proper first aid immediately. Check the victim to see that they are breathing and have a pulse and continue to monitor the victim until help arrives. Begin CPR if necessary.
- ▶ **If possible, move the victim to a safer place.** An active thunderstorm is still dangerous. Don't let the rescuers become victims. Lightning CAN strike the same place twice.



NOAA

STAY INFORMED

Listen to NOAA Weather Radio for the latest forecast and for any severe thunderstorm WATCHES or WARNINGS. Severe thunderstorms produce winds of 58 mph or greater, or hail 3/4 of an inch or larger in diameter.

A severe thunderstorm WATCH is issued when conditions are favorable for severe weather to develop.

A severe thunderstorm WARNING is issued when severe weather is imminent. National Weather Service personnel use information from weather radar, satellite, lightning detection, spotters, and other sources to issue these warnings.



NOAA WEATHER RADIO IS THE BEST WAY TO RECEIVE FORECASTS AND WARNINGS FROM THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE.

Remember that all thunderstorms produce lightning and all lightning can be deadly to those outside.

Lightning Safety Awareness Week is the last full week of June. For additional information on lightning or lightning safety, visit NOAA's lightning safety web site:

<http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov>

or contact us at:

**National Weather Service
P.O. Box 1208
Gray, Maine 04039**

GYX 0301 (August 2003) - Revised

Coach's and Sports Official's Guide to Lightning Safety...



NOAA

LIGHTNING...
the underrated killer!

A SAFETY GUIDE

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND
ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION**



**NATIONAL WEATHER
SERVICE**

Gray, Maine

This safety guide has been prepared to help coaches and sports officials recognize the dangers of lightning and take appropriate safety precautions.

LIGHTNING KILLS

Play It Safe !

Each year in the United States, more than four hundred people are struck by lightning. On average, about 70 people are killed and many others suffer permanent neurological disabilities. Most of these tragedies can be avoided if proper precautions are taken. When thunderstorms threaten, coaches and sports officials must not let the desire to start or complete an athletic activity hinder their judgment when the safety of participants and spectators is in jeopardy.

It is important for coaches and officials to know some basic facts about lightning and its dangers

- ▶ **All thunderstorms produce lightning and are dangerous.** In an average year, lightning kills more people in the U.S. than either tornadoes or hurricanes.
- ▶ **Lightning often strikes outside the area of heavy rain and may strike as far as 10 miles from any rainfall.** Many deaths from lightning occur ahead of storms because people wait too long before seeking shelter, or after storms because people return outside too soon.
- ▶ **If you hear thunder, you are in danger.** Anytime thunder is heard, the thunderstorm is close enough to pose an immediate lightning threat to your location.
- ▶ **Lightning leaves many victims with permanent disabilities.** While only a small percentage of lightning strike victims die, many survivors must learn to live with very serious, life-long disabilities.

To avoid exposing athletes and spectators to the risk of lightning take the following precautions

- ▶ **Postpone activities if thunderstorms are imminent.** Prior to an event, check the latest forecast and, when necessary, postpone activities early to avoid being caught in a dangerous situation. Stormy weather can endanger the lives of participants, staff, and spectators.
- ▶ **Plan ahead.** Have a lightning safety plan. Know where people will go for safety, and know how much time it will take for them to get there. Have specific guidelines for suspending the event or activity so that everyone has time to reach safety before the threat becomes significant. Follow the plan without exception.
- ▶ **Keep an eye on the sky.** Pay attention to weather clues that may warn of imminent danger. Look for darkening skies, flashes of lightning, or increasing wind, which may be signs of an approaching thunderstorm.
- ▶ **Listen for thunder.** If you hear thunder, immediately suspend your event and instruct everyone to get to a safe place. Substantial buildings provide the best protection. Once inside, stay off corded phones, and stay away from any wiring or plumbing. Avoid sheds, small or open shelters, dugouts, bleachers, or grandstands. If a sturdy building is not nearby, a hard-topped metal vehicle with the windows closed will offer good protection, but avoid touching any metal.

- ▶ **Avoid open areas.** Stay away from trees, towers, and utility poles. Lightning tends to strike the taller objects.

- ▶ **Stay away from metal bleachers, backstops and fences.** Lightning can travel long distances through metal.

- ▶ **Do not resume activities until 30 minutes after the last thunder was heard.**

- ▶ **As a further safety measure, officials at outdoor events may want to have a tone-alert NOAA Weather Radio.** The radio will allow you to monitor any short-term forecasts for changing weather conditions, and the tone-alert feature can automatically alert you in case a severe thunderstorm watch or warning is issued. To find your nearest NOAA weather radio transmitter, go to <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/> and click on "Station Listing and Coverage."

If you feel your hair stand on end (indicating lightning is about to strike)

- ▶ **Crouch down on the balls of your feet, put your hands over your ears, and bend your head down.** Make yourself as small a target as possible and minimize your contact with the ground.

- ▶ **Do not lie flat on the ground.**



Your Questions Answered

Read volunteers' questions and answers from **Dan Kirby, Little League International Risk Management Director**, in the new 'Ask Little League' online forum. Here are some exchanges from his interview at: <http://www.littleleague.org/askll/05mar2session.asp>

Pam, a mom of a Little Leaguer in Sugar Land, Texas, asks:

Why does Little League allow fake bunts and then allow the batter to hit away? I am deeply concerned about the safety risk to pitchers and third basemen with this rule. The risk for injury seems excessive.

Dan: At the 2001 Little League International Congress in Ottawa, Canada, a proposal to change Rule 6.06 that would make batter out for an illegal action when a player fakes a bunt and takes a full swing was soundly defeated. The delegates (elected volunteer district administrators or their appointed representatives) defeated the measure with 81 percent voting against the change. One of the requirements for a qualified ASAP (A Safety Awareness Program) safety plan is fundamental training of all coaches and managers. Your local league as well as others can educate your managers and coaches not to utilize fake bunts. It is possible if a lot of requests are submitted, this rule change can be revisited at a future Congress. You can learn more about the Little League International Congress and how rule changes are made here: <http://www.littleleague.org/about/congresshistory.asp>

Dave, a president in local Little League in Johnston, Iowa, asks:

We are developing our initial ASAP (A Safety Awareness Program) Safety Plan.

Want more? Other 'Ask Little League' interviews:

- **Mike Mussina**, pitcher, New York Yankees
- **Jim Michalek**, two-time LLB World Series Manager and USA Baseball 2004 Volunteer Coach of the Year
- **Dr. Barry Goldberg**, director of Sports Medicine at Yale University Health Services, chairman of the USA Baseball Safety Advisory Committee, and member of the Little League International Board of Directors

Some board members have raised the concern that having a plan could actually raise our liability, as we have now documented safety requirements that must be met. Any deficiency or oversight in meeting these requirements could actually make board members and our league more susceptible to potential lawsuits. Is this a valid concern and if so how should we address it?

Dan: I disagree with your board members' position. If I followed their logic, the case could be made that your league is more susceptible to lawsuits by not documenting safety procedures. The ASAP program has been a success because more than the majority of leagues in the United States are utilizing it. I strongly encourage all leagues to participate in the program, but to start with goals that are reasonable. Keep in mind that the mission statement of ASAP is to make Little League safer for all participants in the program.

Gary, an information officer in a local league in Clifton Forge, Va., asks:

The ASAP plan is a very important tool to the success and safety to the leagues, not to mention lower insurance premiums. My question is, why isn't ASAP mandatory in the same way as the volunteer application, or age

requirements? A side note -- If we had 100 percent compliance with the safety plans, look how more we would save in insurance costs.

Dan: I would love to see ASAP utilized in every league, not only in the United States, but throughout the world. This voluntary program emphasizes the importance of local leagues creating and implementing their own safety program. At this point, it is important that we continue to educate and work with leagues in order to implement the program. Rules changes are proposed and discussed at the Little League International Congress, held every three years. Perhaps if enough people feel as strongly as you do about the ASAP program, it could become a topic for a rule change at the next Congress in 2007.

Danny, a local Little League manager in Alameda, Calif., asks:

Will Little League ever change the rule for pitchers to only through a maximum amount of pitches, rather than a maximum amount of innings?

Dan: Rule changes are proposed and debated every three years at the Little League International Congress. The last Congress was held in 2004 in Virginia Beach, Va. The innings count has been a proven, sound limitation for the Little League program for decades. The new variable in recent years has been that players are not only participating in Little League programs, but playing in multiple programs at the same time – some of which may have no limits on pitching. I recommend that leagues that are aware that this is occurring should try to educate parents and players of the dangers of overuse. Changing the rules in the Little League program will not affect how much they pitch in non-Little League programs. If parents would restrict the number of times their child is allowed to pitch during a given week, I believe we would not be seeing the recent rise in concerns of innings pitched.

You've Got Questions

Q "We're new to Little League this year. I was just told about the safety manual on Saturday. When does it have to be done? I was told that it needed to be received before our 1st game but everything I've seen online mentions it being postmarked by May 1st. Thanks for your help."

"PS – Where do I send it to?"

Terri Schoenly

– via email

A The deadline for submitting your safety plan is for it to be postmarked by May 1. But for your plan to be effective in reducing injuries and enhancing the safety of players and volunteers, it does need to be in place and operational at least by the time games begin. That is to allow coaches and other volunteers to know what the league's expectations are for safe play. You can take any additional time prior to May 1 to gather your materials and fill out your registration and facility survey forms, but get it in as soon as possible.

Please ship (FedEx or UPS, etc.) to:

Risk Management Department

c/o Little League Baseball
539 US Route 15 Hwy.
South Williamsport, PA 17702

or if mailing (via US Postal Service):

Risk Management Dept.

c/o Little League Baseball
PO Box 3485
Williamsport, PA 17701

Q "We are trying to do our safety plan again this year and I cannot find a checklist. We did one last year and we had a checklist we had to submit with it and I cannot find one for this year. Could you tell me where I could find one?"

Michele Nichols

– via email

A All the forms are on Little League's website at: <http://www.littleleague.org/programs/asap/index.asp>

You should find a checklist inside the Registration Form, and the Facility Survey is a kind of checklist itself, if that's any help.

Q "I have searched the forms at the ASAP program location and can't find the Little League Facility Form. Can you send me the directions to find the form, or can you send me a word attachment?"

Bob Showers

– via email

A Here is the link to the page where it is located: <http://www.littleleague.org/programs/asap/index.asp>

Please note it is in its own area, not in the "Forms" section, so keep scrolling till you find the Facility Survey link.



Q "Can you send me a copy of the Little League Safety Code? We're struggling to find it, and your help would be appreciated."

Elaine Shaffer

– via email

A The Safety Code is on the last page of every rulebook (page T-24 in the 2005 Official Regulations and Playing Rules book). This helps remind coaches of their obligations to players and their safety.

Q "My son is wearing a goalie-style catcher helmet and the problem is I was told by our league that he is not permitted to use it because it does not have a throat guard. But when you see the helmet itself, it is constructed to protect the catcher at all times. If you see my son there is no part of his head, throat, which is unprotected. I don't disagree with the ruling, but there should be exception to the type of equipment that a parent is willing to purchase to protect their own son or

daughter. I do not want to drill hole to allow connection of the throat guard, so it could cause more harm than safety. I, as a parent, look after my son's health and don't allow him to put on any unsafe equipment. If you would like for me to send you picture the league has taken of my son with the helmet in question. Please let me know. I will be waiting for your response."

Elioth Acevedo, Jr.

– via email

A The rules do not allow the goalie-style helmet, or any catcher's helmet, without a dangling throat guard. While you may feel responsible for your son all the time, while he is participating in Little League, we can't allow him to participate without the mandatory equipment. The dangling guard is designed to protect the throat in case a catcher pulls

back or looks up following a ball's flight and protect the exposed throat to a bat or other object that could cause injury. The league is correct in requiring you to attach a guard if you want your son to use this piece of equipment. There are no exceptions.

Q "Why are not all male players required to wear an athletic cup for protection? Current rules only require catchers to wear an athletic cup. In Minors divisions such as Single-A, any player can end up being a catcher. As a result, managers must ask before they send a player out. A higher level of protection for all male players would be a step in the right direction."

Wah Cheong

Little League Safety Director
Walnut Creek, CA

A Personally, we couldn't agree with you more. On an organizational level, it is difficult to mandate rules for everyone when everyone does not have a need. However, local leagues can institute stronger rules than those of Little League International. Your league could adopt a local rule stating all males must wear a protective cup, or all players who will play infield, etc.

We've Got Answers

"I am an assistant coach for a major league team in Florence, AZ. I would like to know if girls are required to wear some type of cup for protection while catching? Or even playing at all? If so, where can it be purchased? Thank you for your time."

Erin Foster

– via email

A No, the only rule Little League requires for wearing protective cups is for male catchers. It is recommended that all boys wear them for protective purposes, but it is not a rule for anyone other than a male catcher. So girls playing are not required to wear what is called for them a "pelvic protector."

If you look for a woman's/girl's pelvic protector, I'm sure you can find one for your players. It might be for a different sport (hockey as an example) if you buy locally, but it will protect them the same. I found on-line a women's softball sliding short with pelvic protector at Fogdog Sports (<http://www.fogdog.com/sm-wsi-wns384-women-softball-sliding-short-withpelvic-protector-pi-1422845.html>), but there are others that are less expensive and more general.

"If our organization brings an All Star team to Canada for a Canadian Little League tournament, are the players of our team covered by our league insurance?"

Mike Zandri,

Safety Officer

Seneca River North LL

A If your team is playing against another Little League and has met the Regulation IX - Special Games requirements, you should not have any issues, since all LLB local leagues (US and international) are required to have accident insurance as well as general liability insurance in case of injuries to players or volunteers. Regulation IX allows for games between leagues outside of regular season games, and must be approved by the Charter Committee, on recommendation of the Regional Director and District Administrator.

Rapsheets.com update

Rapsheets.com, LLB's partner in offering low cost background checks in the vast majority of states across the U.S., has upgraded their security. The site now has two-way encrypted message transfers, keeping the information you supply and that they supply to your league safer. Please access the rapsheets.com website through Little League's website, or add an "s" to the http — <https://littleleague.rapsheets.com>

"What is the recommendation in Minor Softball for taking a pitcher out of a game when they have hit multiple batters?"

A concerned softball mom

– via email

A No specific rule or recommendation exists for hit batters. The District Administrators, the volunteer representatives of the local leagues, vote on all rule changes at the International Congress held every three years. I suspect this has not been done largely to aid in player development — to help pitchers get over the experience of hitting another player — and to prevent abuse by opposing coaches once a pitcher has hit someone from trying to get someone to "take one for the team" to have the opposing pitcher removed. Of course, if an umpire feels a pitcher intentionally threw at a batter, they could be removed after a warning (Rule 8.02(c)).

However, from reviewing the safety plans which come in from different leagues, it is not uncommon for leagues to set specific limits for hit batters. Little League allows local leagues to set rules which will increase the safety and participation of players, but never to reduce either. No league should allow a pitcher to intentionally throw at a batter, however unintentional hit-batters do occur during the training process. Many leagues generally permit two hit batters per game before removing a pitcher.

"I have a question in regards to regulations that may or may not be in place as it relates to the types of fields the kids should be playing on. In my league the kids playing T-Ball are being asked to play on all grass fields that do not have any dugouts, backstops, fences separating the playing fields from the spectators or players not in the game or any designated area for the spectators to sit. In the simplest terms it is an open grass field."

"In my opinion this poses a safety hazard to the kids, coaches and spectators as it relates to overthrown balls, foul balls and flying bats. I am looking for ASAP's opinion of this and any information you can provide regarding regulations around what should be at the site of a field the kids are playing on."

Alex Jacobs

– via email

A This does not meet Little League's rules for play. While Tee-Ball is not typically recognized for sharply hit balls or strong throws, individual performances will vary, and the bench and spectators still need to be protected. You will not find any difference for the Tee-Ball and Minors Divisions in terms of the field, so all should have the same protection of fencing.

Rule 1.01 states: "...Tee Ball/Minor League Instructional Division is a game between two teams, under the direction of a manager and not more than two coaches, played on a regulation Little League field in accordance with these rules, under the jurisdiction of one or more umpires...."

Rule 1.08 states: "The league shall furnish benches, one each for the home and visiting teams. Such benches shall not be less than 25 feet from the base line. They shall be protected by wire fencing."

Space is always a consideration for leagues, but safe playing conditions are a mandated part of the rules. The board needs to understand the risk to players / spectators by not having fences, and the risk to the league in terms of liability by not following the rules for playing fields.

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Don't miss out on any of the latest Little League news and information! The ASAP News is available several weeks earlier online than in print, and if you are signed up for E-News, you'll be notified within hours of its being posted at www.littleleague.org.

Whether it's rules changes or breaking Little League news, everyone can use E-News (www.littleleague.org/enews) to stay on top of all important updates:

- *Little League News*
- *ASAP Safety Newsletters*
- *ActiveSports.com Updates*
- *Changes and updates to Little League Rules and Regulations Submitted Via Email*

"After several frustrating years of getting back leftover first aid supplies that were dirty, wet, or moldy, I decided to change the way I pack the items.

"Now, I use Zip-Loc® clear plastic bags for packing each teams' supplies (Band-aids® in one bag, gauze pads and gloves in another, etc).

"Not only does it keep everything clean and dry, it also makes it easier when I re-stock the kits at the end of the year (because I can readily see what's been used).

"Using this approach should help reduce your League's supply costs."

**Steve Heffelfinger, Safety Officer
Derry, NH, Little League**

**Call the ASAP Hotline at 800-811-7443
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and have a chance to win an
ASAP 'Safe' cap!**

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