

# Lightning Detection System Installed at Various Park Locations

Several Itasca Park District locations are now equipped with a **Strike Guard** Lightning Detection System. This system detects and tracks lightning and provides a warning when lightning occurs within a five mile radius of the Itasca Recreation and Fitness Center.

When lightning is detected within the warning area, a signal is transmitted to the park locations that have the system. A five to ten second solid tone siren will sound, and a strobe light will flash on the unit. After the **Strike Guard** System determines conditions are safe (30 minutes of no lightning), the siren will sound intermittent blasts and the strobe light will go off, providing notice that it is safe to resume activity in the area.

**The following locations are equipped with the Lightning Detection System (siren and strobe):**

- Benson Park north of the parking lot
  - Recreation Center / Washington Park on the roof of the Rec Center
  - Itasca Waterpark on pole inside the park
  - Franzen Park on the roof of the maintenance garage (siren and strobe) and near the backstop of the ball diamond (strobe only)
  - Itasca Softball Complex
  - Springbrook Nature Center on the roof
- Installation is also scheduled for Peacock Park in 2014 to coincide with the park renovation project.

This project was coordinated by the Itasca Park District, in cooperation with the Village of Itasca. The project was also presented to members of the Itasca Safe Communities Coalition. The cost was approximately \$50,000. It was funded with \$25,000 from the Itasca Park District, \$15,000 from the Village of Itasca, and \$10,000 from a Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) grant received by the Park District.

Please familiarize yourself with the system at the park locations that you use. Parks that have the system will have signage explaining lightning procedures.

It is important to note the hours of operation of the system. **Lightning Warnings will be provided between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m.**

Warning detection systems are not failsafe. Always be vigilant in monitoring threatening weather and always err on the side of caution. Seek shelter immediately in the event of the following:

- You hear one solid tone siren.
  - You hear thunder (regardless of siren).
  - You see lightning (regardless of siren).
  - You see the strobe light on when arriving at the park.
- No place outdoors is safe when a thunderstorm is near. The **best shelter** from lightning is to be inside a **substantial building**.

- **Avoid** car ports, porches, garages, sheds, tents, baseball dugouts, or under bleachers.
- If no substantial shelter is available, then **seek refuge in a hard-topped vehicle**, with the windows up.
- **Stay away** from trees, electrical poles, or other tall objects.
- **DO NOT LIE FLAT ON THE GROUND!** Crouch down on the balls of your feet to create the lowest profile.

For questions, concerns, and comments regarding the Lightning Detection System, please contact Joe McCann, Superintendent of Recreation, Itasca Park District at 630-773-2257.

