## 2020 NFHS SOFTBALL RULE CHANGES

### Penalty Note:
Damaged bats are defined

**Rationale:** Clarifies that a damaged bat is removed from the game without penalty.

### 6-1-1:
Prior to starting the delivery (pitch), the pitcher shall take a position with the pivot foot in contact with the pitcher's plate.

**Rationale:** Clarifies that the pivot foot must be in contact with the pitcher’s plate, rather than on the top surface of the pitcher’s plate.

### 9-1-1 Exception c:
A run is not scored if the runner advances to home plate during action in which the third out is made by the preceding runner who is declared out on an appeal play.

**Rationale:** Clarifies that on any appeal play, a run is not scored if the third out is made by a preceding runner.

## 2020 COMMENTS ON RULES CHANGES

### 1-5-1.c.d.e
2-4-3, 7-4-2:
Added language to give a clear definition of a damaged bat separating it from illegal and altered bats. Damaged bats are not to be considered illegal bats, therefore they do not carry the same penalty as illegal bats. Damaged bats should be removed from the game without penalty. Language added additional certification marking (USA Softball All Games mark) to update current legal marks.

### 6-1-1:
Clarifies that any part of the pivot foot is in contact with the pitcher’s plate is legal and no longer limits the pivot foot to contacting just the top surface of the pitcher’s plate, which reflects current practice.

### 9-1-1 Exception c:
Added language to make clear that if a preceding runner is called out on appeal, subsequent runner(s) that cross the plate do not count as run(s) scored.

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**26th ANNUAL OFFICIALS’ CONVENTION**  
**AUGUST 7th AND 8th, 2020**  
**HILTON HARRISBURG**
2020 NFHS SOFTBALL MAJOR EDITORIAL CHANGES

1-1-7: Clarifies that game management or a state administrator may establish a dead-ball media area within the confines of the field, but that area will remain a dead ball area throughout the game.

1-5-1d: Updates to add the new USA Softball All Games certification mark.

8-4-3d PENALTY: Clarifies that the batter-runner, not the batter is awarded bases when a fielder intentionally contacts the ball with detached equipment.

2020 POINTS OF EMPHASIS

Bat Certification Marks and USA Softball Non-Approved Bats with Certification Marks

The NFHS Softball Rules Committee made the determination that clarification was needed to ensure each batter comes to the plate with a bat displaying the proper certification mark making it legal for use in high school play. Bat manufacturers produce several models of bats for multiple organizations. These different models are often custom designed to meet the specific organizations’ individual certification requirements. Bats that are custom designed for one organization may only bear that organization's certification mark. Conversely, a large number of these bats are designed to meet several organizations' requirements and will bear multiple organizations certifications marks – making them legal to use in multiple codes. What is important to know is that NFHS softball recognizes and utilizes USA Softball’s certification process.

In order for a bat to be legal for use in NFHS softball it must be marked with the ASA 2000, 2004 or the USA Softball All-Games Certification Mark. Additionally, any bat with one of these certification marks must not appear on the list of the USA Softball Non-Approved Bats with Certification Marks. This list was created as a way to alert players and coaches that a bat that was once approved for use has now been deemed no longer approved for use. All bats that are approved by USA Softball, formally ASA, for use in fast pitch play shall bear one of the markings shown below. Once these bats have entered the market and possible issues arise, there is a process for revoking the approval of these bats. When it has been determined that a bat should have its approval revoked, either through the re-testing process or for a voluntary removal from the manufacturer, the bat is added to the Non-Approved Bats list with Certification Marks. These bats were approved when originally manufactured and were legal for play at that time, but due to some unforeseen issues no longer pass the approval requirements.

Inspection of Equipment

It is the head coach’s responsibility to make certain all players are legally and properly equipped, which includes checking bats, helmets and catcher’s gear prior to every contest. Although umpires may inspect equipment, they are no longer required to do so. What is important to remember is equipment wears during use. Bats can become damaged, or a player may purchase a new bat that does not meet the NFHS requirements. Both catchers’ helmets as well as batter’s helmets have screws that hold face guards in place. These screws loosen and will eventually fall out rendering the equipment illegal for use and potentially causing a safety risk to the player if not detected. It is critical that coaches remain vigilant in inspecting equipment before every contest to ensure no damage has occurred or new noncompliant equipment has been purchased since their last inspection.
2020 POINTS OF EMPHASIS CONT’D

Damaged Bat vs Illegal Bat Penalty

Clarification was needed to delineate the difference between a player using a bat that is damaged versus a bat that is illegal for high school play. By definition, a bat that is damaged (Rule 2-4-3c) is removed from the game without penalty (7-4-2 NOTE). An illegal bat that is non-approved or altered will continue to result in the head coach and the batter being ejected.

Contact with the Pitcher’s Plate

Due to the varying levels of play and levels of skill in pitching development, prior to the start of the pitch, NFHS rules allow the pitcher to choose foot placement. The pitcher may choose to take a position with the pivot foot in contact with the plate and the non-pivot foot behind the pitcher’s plate or both feet in contact with the pitcher’s plate. Prior to the start of delivery, both feet must be on the ground within or partially within the 24-inch length of the pitcher’s plate. This allows for personal preference and developing pitchers to work through levels of progression.

2020 PIAA ADOPTIONS AND MODIFICATIONS

- Adopt the 2020 NFHS Softball Rules Book.
- Adopt Rule 1-2-1 NOTE, authorizing the optional use of the Double First Base.
- Modify Rule 3-5-1, head coach and team captain must attend pregame conference.
- Adopt Rule 4-2-3, relative to suspended games.
- Adopt Rule 4-2, 15-runs after 3 innings or 10-runs after 5 innings and 1 1/2-hour time limit or other time limit if a public park is used, all at all levels (varsity, junior varsity, or otherwise) of competition.
- Adopt Rule 4-2-3 NOTE 2, to permit two 5-inning games to constitute a doubleheader only at the sub-varsity levels (junior varsity and junior high/middle school) of competition.
- Adopt Rule 4-2-5, tie-breaker procedure, upon completion of 9 innings the player who last completed her turn at bat is placed on 2nd base.
- Adopt Rule 5-2-1b NOTE, when the umpire considers the weather or ground conditions unfit for play, after 30 minutes, the umpire may declare the game ended or suspended.

2020 PIAA SOFTBALL DISTRICT INTERPRETERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Interpreter</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 2020 IMPROPER CONDUCT PENALTY SUMMARY CHART

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Penalty</th>
<th>Infraction</th>
<th>Additional Info</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **First Offense** – Team warning  
**Second Offense** – Offender restricted to dugout/bench | 1. Lineup changes after submitted and verified.  
2. Faking a tag (3-6-2).  
3. Carelessly throwing a bat (3-6-3).  
4. Hitting balls to teammates on defense (3-6-4).  
5. Entering behind the catcher while the opposing pitcher and catcher are in their positions (3-6-5).  
6. Being outside the dugout/bench (3-6-6).  
7. Use of amplifiers or bullhorns for coaching purposes (3-6-8).  
8. Calling time or using any command or commit any act for the purpose of causing an illegal pitch (3-6-9).  
9. Objects other than scorekeeping materials/devices in the coach’s box (3-6-10). | 1. Head coach is the offender (3-1-3).  
2. Faking a tag is also obstruction (3-6-2).  
7. If offender is a coach, depending on severity, on first offense the umpire may issue warning or immediately restrict to bench/dugout or eject (3-6-8). |
| **First Offense** – Team warning  
**Second Offense** – Offender and Head Coach restricted to dugout/bench | 1. Illegal equipment (3-6-1).  
2. Unreported substitute (3-6-7).  
3. Intentionally removing lines (3-6-17). | 3. Additional penalty of a called strike or ball (3-6-17). |
| **Ejection**  
Unless judged to be of a minor offense. If minor, offender is warned and ejected if repeated. | 1. Electronic communication devices (3-6-11).  
2. Use of tobacco products (3-6-12).  
3. Unsporting acts (3-6-13).  
4. Charging an umpire (3-6-14).  
5. Arguing balls and strikes or judgment calls (3-6-15).  
6. Deliberately throwing equipment (3-6-16). | 1. and 3. Coaches who violate may be restricted or ejected (3-6-11, 13). |
| **Ejection** | 1. Initiating malicious contact (3-6-18).  
2. Fighting (3-6-19).  
3. Use of altered or non-approved bat (7-4-2). | 3. Offender and head coach ejected. |
NFHS OFFICIAL SOFTBALL SIGNALS

A. Do not pitch
   Signal toward pitcher

B. Play ball
   Verbally calls “Play ball”

C. Time out/Foul ball/Dead ball
   Verbally calls “Time,” “Foul ball,” or “Dead ball”

D. Delayed dead ball
   Extend left arm out, fist with palm down (or out)

E. Strike/Out
   Fist to hammer at 90 degrees

F. Infield Fly
   Verbally calls “Infield fly”

G. Safe
   Verbally calls “Safe”

H. Fair Ball
   Point to fair territory with hand closest to infield. No verbal call.

I. Foul Tip
   Fingers touch together, chest high, followed by strike call

J. Count
   Left hand indicates balls, followed by strikes on the right hand. Verbally give count.

K. Home run
   Right hand in the air, rotate counterclockwise

L. Double
   First two fingers in the air
**OUTDOOR EVENTS: SPECTATOR DECORUM**

The presence and/or the use of balloons, banners, laser pointers, noisemakers, pom-poms (by spectators), shakers, signs, sirens, strips of material, towels, whistles, and/or portable listening devices (without earphones) are PROHIBITED! Persons using such items may be removed from the Contest. The use of pom-poms by cheerleaders and small portable listening devices with earphones is permitted. During basketball Contests cheerleaders may utilize portable signs in their cheer performances and confirm that this does not violate the intent of the “no sign” policy. Spectators are prohibited from removing their shirt and/or using body paint while in attendance at District and Inter-District Championship Contests and may be removed from the Contest for doing so. Principals and Athletic Directors shall inform and publicize these regulations to students. The failure of a school to so inform or publicize will not, however, prevent removal from the Contest for violations of this policy.

*As copied from the PIAA Policies and Procedures Manual.*

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**SPORTS MEDICINE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

The PIAA Sports Medicine Committee recommends that each registered sports official have an annual physical examination and practice good health habits. Being physically fit and conveying an appropriate, positive image through proper health and nutrition habits will greatly assist all officials in keeping up with the game. After all, the game, the schools, players, coaches, spectators and fellow officials deserve no less. As importantly, officials owe good health habits to themselves and their families if for nothing more, than the health of it. If officials have any chronic health condition, officials are requested to share this information with on site medical personnel at their contest(s).

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**UNIVERSAL HYGIENE PROTOCOL FOR ALL SPORTS**

- Shower immediately after every competition and practice.
- Wash all workout clothing after each practice.
- Wash personal gear (knee pads and braces) weekly.
- Do not share towels or personal hygiene products (razors) with others.
- Refrain from full body (chest, arms, abdomen) cosmetic shaving.

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**OFFICIALS MANUAL**

The PIAA Official’s Manual provides valuable information concerning many aspects of officiating as they relate to PIAA policies and procedures. All officials can become aware of the contents of the Officials' Manual which can be found under the Officials heading at [www.piaa.org](http://www.piaa.org). Click Officials Homepage, the Official’s Manual can be found to the right hand side of the homepage.
OFFICIAL’S UNIFORM

1. The PIAA Official's Emblem must be worn on the upper left sleeve of the official's standard shirt when officiating in all PIAA sponsored games.

2. All PIAA-registered officials must wear identical uniforms during a contest.

3. Required uniform for Softball umpires:

   Shirt - One of the following shirts is to be worn: (1) Navy blue pullover with red and white stripe trim on sleeves and collar; (2) Light blue pullover with navy blue and white stripe trim on the sleeves and collar with the standard buttons (no zipper style shirts permitted). The pullover style shirt shall only be of a micromesh material; (3) Long sleeve shirt. The light blue shirt is the shirt of choice and will be worn at the championships.
   
   Note: If an umpire wears a long sleeve undershirt or turtleneck, the long sleeve undergarment sleeve is not to be exposed under the pullover shirt. You must wear a jacket or sweater over the long sleeve undergarment so as the undergarment sleeves are not exposed.

   Patch - The ONLY patch that is permitted to be worn is the PIAA Keystone patch which MUST be worn on the left sleeve of the shirt 3” down from the shoulder seam. If you are wearing a jacket or sweater while umpiring, you are NOT required to have a PIAA Keystone patch on your jacket or sweater.

   Jacket - The pullover style jacket must be solid navy blue only. Jackets or sweaters with identification other than PIAA are NOT permitted to be worn while umpiring PIAA contest at any levels.

   Undershirt - Navy Blue – this also applies to a Turtleneck.

   Slacks - Gray – Shorts are NOT permitted.

   Socks - Black.

   Shoes - Solid Black or Black with white accents with black laces. White soles around the shoe are not considered an accent mark.

   Belt - Black, if worn, with small metal buckle.

   Cap - Navy Blue – Caps are to be fitted type only, not adjustable style. Both male and female umpires must wear caps properly in all positions. Cap with Gold 1 ½” high “PIAA” letters are REQUIRED for all regular season, district and inter-district advanced play.

   Ball Bag—Navy Blue—2 Ball Bags may be worn.

   Jewelry—Umpires are NOT permitted to wear jewelry, with the exception of your wedding band and a Medical Alert Bracelet or Necklace while umpiring. The restrictions that pertain to a player for a Medical Alert Bracelet or Necklace also pertain to umpires.

   NOTE: ALL UNIFORM ITEMS MUST BE IDENTICAL TO PARTNER(S), DRESS ALIKE!!!
PIAA 2020 SOFTBALL SCHEDULE

First Practice Date ............................................................... Monday, March 2
First Inter-School/Scrimmage Date ........................................ Saturday, March 7
First Regular Season Play Date ......................................... Friday, March 20
Last Regular Season Contest Date and
District Championship Deadline ....................................... Saturday, May 30
PIAA Softball Championships:
  First Round ................................................................. Monday, June 1
  Quarterfinals ............................................................... Thursday, June 4
  Semi-Finals ................................................................. Monday, June 8
PIAA Softball Championship Finals
Beard Field at Nittany Lion Softball Park, Penn State Univ … Thursday, June 11 and Friday, June 12
  Championship Schedule for Thursday, June 11, 2020:
    A Championship .................................................. June 11 @ 11:00 a.m.
    AAA Championship ........................................ June 11 @ 1:30 p.m.
    AAAAA Championship ................................ June 11 @ 4:00 p.m.
  Championship Schedule for Friday, June 12, 2020:
    AA Championship ........................................ June 12 @ 11:00 a.m.
    AAAAA Championship ................................ June 12 @ 1:30 p.m.
    AAAAAAA Championship ................................ June 12 @ 4:00 p.m.

PIAA SPORTSMANSHIP MESSAGE

**This message shall be read to the head coach and captains prior to each contest officiated by a registered PIAA official. This message shall be enforced by contest officials and its enforcement shall include a strict and swift enforcement when unsportsmanlike actions involve demeaning remarks or actions that may be related to the racial or ethnic background of any party.**

PIAA requires all registered sports' officials to enforce the sportsmanship rules for coaches and contestants. Actions meant to demean opposing contestants, teams, spectators, and officials are not in the highest ideals of interscholastic education and will not be tolerated. Let today's contest reflect mutual respect. Coaches please certify to the contest official(s) that your contestants are legally equipped and uniformed according to NFHS rules and PIAA adoptions. Good luck in today's contest.

The proper procedure is head coaches and captains MUST attend the pre-game reading of the sportsmanship message.

Coaches must certify to the contest officials their team is legally equipped and in compliance with NFHS Softball Rules. The reading of this message will have the coaches verbally confirm aloud their teams' adherence to compliance with equipment and safety rules. This confirmation is not only the adherence to contest rules, but also assists in alleviating the legal liability concerns for the officials if the teams subsequently violate the proper equipment provisions of the contest rules.
PIAA BY-LAWS: ARTICLE XIII, SECTION 8

Any Coach and/or contestant who, while Coaching or competing for a PIAA member school, is ejected from a Contest by a state high school association recognized and/or registered official in that sport for unsportsmanlike conduct or flagrant misconduct is disqualified from Coaching and/or participating for the remainder of the day and in all Contests on the next Contest day of the same level (varsity, junior varsity, or otherwise) of competition from which the Coach and/or contestant was previously disqualified. For a Coach, participation in the next Contest includes any contact by the Coach with members of the Team, including other Coaches, between the time that the Team arrives at the Contest site and the conclusion of the last Contest of the day. The Principal must direct the Coach not to attend all of the Contest(s).

Any Coach and/or contestant ejected from the last Contest(s) in that sport in a sport season is disqualified from Coaching and/or participating in the first Contest(s) in that sport in the subsequent sport season, at the same level (varsity, junior varsity, or otherwise) of competition, at any PIAA member school or, if the Coach and/or student changes levels of competition, such as from junior varsity to varsity, the first Contest(s) in that sport.

In Softball, the athletic director and principal must meet with the ejected coach/contestant and detail in a report what corrective action has been taken. This report then must be signed by all parties and sent to the district Softball chairperson.

When a coach or contestant is disqualified/ejected from a Regular or Post-Regular Season Contest a report must be filed by the official who disqualified/ejected the coach or contestant. When the report is received in the PIAA Office it is viewed by the concerned school Principal and Athletic Director and emailed to the respective District Chairmen, officials’ representatives and sportsmanship chair. A copy is also given to the Assistant Executive Director and placed in the school’s file.

The official shall file a report on-line with the PIAA Office on the form prescribed for the sport involved, within twenty-four (24) hours following the completion of the Contest in which the ejection occurred. Failure to file such report shall not affect the validity or consequences of the ejection.

PIAA BY-LAWS—ARTICLE XV; SECTION 5
RECOMMENDATION OF A WRITTEN CONTRACT

PIAA member schools should enter into written (paper or electronic) contracts with the officials retained by the schools or assigned by an assignor to officiate regular season contests. The terms of such contracts must not violate the PIAA Constitution and By-Laws, Policies and Procedures and Rules and Regulations. Registered sports officials are independent contractors and therefore, are NOT employees of PIAA, the school, or the assignor.
EXAMPLES OF DISQUALIFICATION PROVISION
OF ARTICLE XIII, SECTION 8

The following examples are for players or coaches and are only examples and not a complete list. What this means is a player or coach ejected from a contest at any level must sit out the remainder of the day and the next day of the next contest at that level.

Example #1: Player/coach gets ejected from a junior varsity contest before a varsity contest. This player/coach gets disqualified for the remainder of the day and the next day of the next junior varsity contest. If this contest is followed by a varsity contest on the same day, the player/coach gets disqualified for the varsity contest also (the whole day).

Example #2: Player/coach gets ejected from a varsity contest on Friday, the team’s next varsity contest is Friday. Before the varsity contest is a scheduled junior varsity contest, player/coach cannot participate in any of Friday contests.

Example #3: Player/coach gets ejected from a varsity softball game Saturday. The next varsity contest is a game on next Friday but the game gets postponed to Saturday. On Saturday, the junior varsity team is to compete in another softball game, a player and/or coach eligible to participate in the junior varsity game? Since the Friday contest was postponed the next varsity game is the same day as the junior varsity game and the player/coach are not eligible to participate the whole day.

ENFORCEMENT OF RULES AND USE OF SIGNALS / MECHANICS

All officials must pay particular attention to the enforcement of playing rules as they are written and also the use of approved signals and mechanics, especially as they relate to ejections. Failure to enforce the rules as written and/or failing to use approved signals and mechanics makes it difficult for PIAA to support officials when an ejection occurs.

USE OF DRONES POLICY

For the purposes of this policy, a drone is any unmanned aerial device ("UAV").

Drones are not permitted above the competition surface or spectator areas during interscholastic Contests, Inter-school Practices and Scrimmages. Drones may not be used to scout opposing team Practices. Member schools may utilize drones for their own school team practice sessions based upon their local school policies.

Persons and/or schools violating this Policy shall be subject to sanctions which may be imposed under Sections 5, 6, 7 and/or 9 of ARTICLE XIII, PENALTIES, of the PIAA By-Laws.

Upon timely requests submitted to PIAA, the Executive Director is authorized to grant exceptions to this policy on a case-by-case basis with any host school/facility local policies.
CANCELLATION OF AN OFFICIAL’S CONTRACT BY A PIAA MEMBER SCHOOL

If a PIAA member school violates or cancels a contract with an official, the District Committee or the Board of Directors, in their respective jurisdictions, may require a school so violating or so canceling to pay to the offended official the fee or fees for the Contest or Contests which have been provided in the official contract. Failure of a PIAA member school to live up to the terms of the contract shall be considered a violation of the Constitution and By-Laws of PIAA.

Comment: It has been brought to our attention on numerous occasions that officials have lost assignments or games because a school or assignor has “double booked” the contest. Officials are reminded that unless there is a written contract executed between the parties, they have no claim to any type of reimbursement from the offending school(s). Many schools have made a “good faith” effort to the officials to get them an additional assignment in the future or offer a scrimmage to pick up the lost fees. However, officially, without a written, signed, properly executed contract between the official(s) and the school(s), there is no recourse for the officials. In this day of technology it is not very hard for assignors, or schools, to execute these contracts. This is part of an assignor’s responsibility. Officials should request contracts from their assignors or schools for both parties protection.

If you are in need of updating your officiating supplies, please be reminded that Officially Sports is the official vendor of PIAA Sport Officials’ Uniforms. Please give them your consideration for any purchases regarding officials’ supplies. If interested, you may provide them with your email address to send you their catalog, seasonal specials and discounted items that may be of interest and service to your avocation of sports’ officiating. Officially Sports may be contacted via email at sales@officiallysports.com, by calling 800-934-4555 or at www.officiallysports.com.

RENEWING BACKGROUND CLEARANCES

Background clearances attached to officials profiles must be valid to officiate. Clearances are valid for five years from the date of issue. Officials cannot officiate past the date of expiration on any one clearance.

For information on obtaining new clearances, please visit the PIAA website at: http://www.piaa.org/officials/become/clearances.aspx

For instructions to upload the documents: http://www.piaa.org/assets/web/documents/Online%20Instructions%20for%20Officials%20to%20enter%20their%20clearances%20into%20the%20Officials%20Database%20-%20Updated%203-19.pdf
### INFECTIOUS SKIN DISEASES

**Strategies for reducing the potential exposure to these infectious agents include:**

- Athletes must be told to notify a parent or guardian, athletic trainer and coach of any skin lesion prior to any competition or practice. An appropriate health-care professional should evaluate any skin lesion before returning to competition.
- If an outbreak occurs on a team, especially in a contact sport, all team members should be evaluated to help prevent the potential spread of infection.
- Coaches, officials and appropriate health-care professionals must follow NFHS or state/local guidelines on “time until return to competition.” Participation with a covered lesion may be considered if in accordance with NFHS, state or lock guidelines and the lesion is no longer contagious.

### BLOOD-BORNE INFECTIOUS DISEASE

**Strategies for reducing the potential exposure to these agents include following Universal Precautions such as:**

- An athlete who is bleeding, has an open wound, has any amount of blood on his/her uniform, or has blood on his/her person, shall be directed to leave the activity (game or practice) until the bleeding is stopped, the wound is covered, the uniform and/or body is appropriately cleaned, and/or the uniform is changed before returning to activity.
- Athletic trainers or other caregivers need to wear gloves and take other precautions to prevent blood or body fluid-splash from contaminating themselves or others.
- In the event of a blood or body fluid-splash, immediately wash contaminated skin or mucous membranes with soap and water.
- Clean all contaminated surfaces and equipment with disinfectant before returning to competition. Be sure to use gloves when cleaning.
- Any blood exposure or bites to the skin that break the surface must be reported and immediately evaluated by an appropriate health-care professional.

### COMMUNICABLE DISEASE AND SKIN INFECTION PROCEDURES

Proper precautions are needed to minimize the potential risk of the spread of communicable disease and skin infections during athletic competition. These conditions include skin infections that occur due to skin contact with competitors and equipment. The transmission of infections such as Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) and Herpes Gladiatorum, blood-borne pathogens such as HIV and Hepatitis B, and other infectious diseases such as Influenza can often be greatly reduced through proper hygiene. The NFHS SMAC has outlined and listed below some general guidelines for the prevention of the spread of these diseases.

### OTHER COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

**Means of reducing the potential exposure to these agents include:**

- Appropriate vaccination of athletes, coaches and staff as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).
- During time of outbreaks, follow the guidelines set forth by the CDC as well as State and local Health Departments.

For more detailed information, refer to the Infectious Disease and Blood-borne Pathogens” and “Skin Disorders” sections contained in the NFHS Sports Medicine Handbook.
These guidelines provide a default policy to those responsible or sharing duties for making decisions concerning the suspension and restarting of practices and contests based on the presence of lightning or thunder. The preferred sources from which to request such a policy for your facility would include your state high school activities association and the nearest office of the National Weather Service.

**PROACTIVE PLANNING**

1. Assign staff to monitor local weather conditions before and during practices and contests.
2. Develop an evacuation plan, including identification of appropriate nearby safer areas and determine the amount of time needed to get everyone to a designated safer area:
   
   A. A designated safer place is a substantial building with plumbing and wiring where people live or work, such as a school, gymnasium or library. An alternate safer place from the threat of lightning is a fully enclosed (not convertible or soft top) metal car or school bus.

3. Develop criteria for suspension and resumption of play:
   
   A. When thunder is heard or lightning is seen*, the leading edge of the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Suspend play for at least 30 minutes and vacate the outdoor activity to the previously designated safer location immediately.

   B. 30-minute rule. Once play has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or lightning is witnessed* prior to resuming play.

   C. Any subsequent thunder or lightning* after the beginning of the 30-minute count will reset the clock and another 30-minute count should begin.

   D. When lightning-detection devices or mobile phone apps are available, this technology could be used to assist in making a decision to suspend play if a lightning strike is noted to be within 10 miles of the event location. However, you should never depend on the reliability of these devices and, thus, hearing thunder or seeing lightning* should always take precedence over information from a mobile app or lightning-detection device.

   * – At night, under certain atmospheric conditions, lightning flashes may be seen from distant storms. In these cases, it may be safe to continue an event. If no thunder can be heard and the flashes are low on the horizon, the storm may not pose a threat. Independently verified lightning detection information would help eliminate any uncertainty.

4. Review the lightning safety policy annually with all administrators, coaches and game personnel and train all personnel.

5. Inform student-athletes and their parents of the lightning policy at start of the season.

Revised and Approved March 2018
SOFTBALL PLAYER, COACH, OR TEAM PERSONNEL DISQUALIFICATION FORM

During the softball Regular Season and Postseason, a disqualified softball player, coach, and/or Team personnel shall not be permitted to participate for the remainder of the day and in all Contests on the next Contest day of the same level (varsity, junior varsity, or otherwise) of competition from which the player, coach, and/or Team personnel was previously disqualified. For a coach, participation in the next Contest includes any contact by the coach with members of the Team, including other coaches, between the time that the Team arrives at the Contest site and the conclusion of the last Contest of the day. The Principal must direct the coach not to attend all of the Contest(s), in accordance with ARTICLE XIII, Section 8, of the PIAA By-Laws. In addition, NFHS Softball Rules 2-19, 3-6-13, 3-6-19, 10-2-3f and 10-3-1 may also apply. The ejecting official must complete this form on-line, as soon as possible, but no later than 24 hours following the completion of the Contest in which the disqualification took place. This form can be found at [www.piaa.org](http://www.piaa.org) under the Officials Section – Officials’ Forms category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Disqualified Player, Coach and/or Team Personnel</th>
<th>School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date of Game</td>
<td>Location of Game/Tournament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting Team</td>
<td>PIAA District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Team</td>
<td>PIAA District</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name of Official Who Issued Disqualification</td>
<td>Level of Competition</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

REASON FOR DISQUALIFICATION

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