

# 2023-2024 Athletic Handbook



## **Administration**

Carin Hetzler-Nettles, Principal

Jena Ferry, Assistant Principal  
Kristine Fewox, Assistant Principal  
Kelly Garrett, Assistant Principal  
Katelyn Overbeck, Assistant Principal

Tico Hernandez, Athletic Director  
Lorraine McKinney, Bookkeeper  
Athletic Department  
Phone (813) 346-4400

## STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

- WE BELIEVE: that interscholastic athletics are an integral part of a school's curriculum.
- WE BELIEVE: that participation in a wide variety of interscholastic sports programs contributes positively toward the development of a young person's health, physical ability, social competence and discipline.
- WE BELIEVE: that the experiences of rigorous interscholastic athletic competition contribute significantly toward the emotional and moral stability of our young people.
- WE BELIEVE: in providing a well-balanced and organized program of interscholastic athletics for girls and boys, and in managing and operating this program within the guidelines and policies of the District School Board of Pasco County and the Florida High School Athletic Association.

## **Chain-of-Command**

Please adhere to the following steps whenever important information regarding any aspect of the athletic program- including concerns, grievances, or questions- must be communicated:

1. Players must first speak to their Coaches.
2. Assistant Coaches must speak to the Head Coach in their sport.  
If the matter involves two programs, the Head Coaches must first discuss the matter.
3. The Head Coach must take his/her concerns to the Athletic Director.  
If any Player, Parent, or Assistant Coach approaches the Athletic Director or Administration, they are referred immediately to the Head Coach.
4. The Athletic Director communicates to the Administration and County Athletic Director.
5. The Principal communicates with the Superintendent and the Athletic Director.  
If any Player or Assistant Coach approaches the Principal, they are referred immediately to the Head Coach.
6. The Superintendent addresses the School Board.

**Communication is the key to problem solving and building a cohesive staff. Also, make sure you communicate with your athletes and the parents. Many problems can be avoided through adequate communication. It is imperative and expected that you check your email on a daily basis, as many important messages are often sent via email.**

## **Home Campus/MaxPreps, NHFS website (video) CPR/AED**

1. Rosters and schedules will be entered in to HomeCampus
2. Coaches must hold a professional teaching certificate or approved coaching certificate

3. Coaches and athletes must complete the FHSAA required training courses via NFHSlearn.com
4. Coaches must be CPR/AED certified.

### Eligibility

#### Prior to the first practice session, all students must have:

1. A current physical examination.  
**Preparticipation Physical Evaluation Must be on EL2 FHSAA form**
2. A signed and notarized parent permission form for the current year.  
**(Athletic Participation Form)**
3. **Consent and Release of Liability Certificate EL3**
4. **PCS Athletic Information for Students and Parents Form**
5. **Transportation Release Form**
6. The County required participation fee of \$80.00 (non-refundable) for the first sport, due within 3 days of making a team. A fee of \$40.00 is required for each additional sport played (maximum for family \$180.00). **\*\*Subject to change\*\***
7. An original birth certificate must be presented to the coach for verification. (This need only be presented to the coach one time while student remains at CCHS).
8. A student living out of the Cypress Creek High School attendance zone must also have:
  - A) Completed and approved Pasco County Special Attendance Request form on file in the registrar's office.

In order to participate in a contest, the athlete must be entered into the Home Campus database. If any student participates who is not on the Home Campus roster, the contest will be forfeited. It is imperative that you ensure your roster is correct. It is also required that you input all scores and results into MaxPreps within 24 hours of completing the match or game.

### NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS

If you know you will have a home school or foreign exchange student, begin the paperwork as soon as possible. The process can take approximately 4 weeks for foreign exchange students.

1. **Home Education**-all forms must be completed and filed prior to the first day of practice. Please refer to **Article 11.1.3 and 11.1.4 of the FHSAA Bylaws and Policy 14 (C)** in the Administrative Guidelines, Policies and Procedures section in the FHSAA Handbook. The Home Education program must be registered with the county.
2. **Foreign Exchange Student**-all forms must be completed and filed prior to the first day of practice. The amount of paperwork that is required for a foreign exchange student is extensive and will require additional time to complete.

**\*\*\*FHSAA Paperwork Requirements are subject to change\*\*\***

**It is the head coach's responsibility to ensure all paperwork is completed before an athlete participates in any type of physical activity.** If any form has missing signatures of either the student or parent, the FHSAA deems that athlete ineligible. It is your responsibility to ensure all forms are completed. At no time is it acceptable to have athletes participating without all required documents. If a player is practicing or participating without all paperwork being completed the coach can be suspended or removed from their position.

## Fees

The mandatory participation fee must be paid prior to an athlete participating in a contest. The athletic fee is the only fee that may be required by any sport. Anything else a Coach may wish to purchase, i.e. competition entry fees, spirit wear, team shoes, hats, etc... must be fundraised for. You may not require students to purchase these items to be a part of any team.

## ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY AND INELIGIBILITY

A period of seven (7) calendar days beyond the last day of the marking period is provided to determine academic eligibility during the current school year.

1. **Any athlete not meeting FHSA 2.0 Cumulative GPA is also ineligible for practice.**
2. All athletes after 1st semester as 9th grader must maintain 2.0 for semester eligibility.
3. Coaches are encouraged to check their athletes grades regularly to be sure no student has more than 2 Fs at any time.
4. 9<sup>th</sup> graders must be regularly promoted.
5. If a student misses 4 or more periods of school on the day of a game, match, or meet the student is ineligible to participate on that day.  
If student/athlete obtains 10 unexcused absences in a semester in any period, they will not be eligible for the remainder of the semester and the next 9-week period. (Subject to change). Attendance is checked monthly

**\*Head Coaches- Make sure you educate your athletes regarding all eligibility requirements.**

## SUSPENSION FROM SCHOOL

Pasco County School board policy dictates that any student assigned Out-of-School suspension may not practice or participate in an athletic contest while suspended. This suspension will also apply during any appeal process. Suspensions involving multiple days will be dealt with on an individual basis and may result in game suspensions or dismissal. Students who receive a Level 2 suspension are ineligible to participate in the next contest.

## COMMITMENT

An athlete must understand that playing a sport is very demanding on his or her time for practice and games. Many of these occur during holidays, on Saturday, etc. The coach and team expect you to be there. An Athlete missing any contest during holidays for club/travel type teams will be considered unexcused and subject to the coach's policy regarding unexcused absences. Any other absences must be pre-arranged and approved by the Head Coach. Removal of an athlete from a sports team should be cleared with the AD prior to removal. Grounds for removal should be laid out in sport policies. **Any athlete, who quits a team or is dismissed for disciplinary reasons, will be ineligible for another sport until the current season is over.**

## STEALING

Stealing by any of our athletes will not be tolerated and will be grounds for **immediate dismissal from the team** and may affect future athletic participation.

## **CLASS ATTENDANCE**

Students can never make up for class instruction missed when absent from classes. Thus, it is imperative that students be in school whenever physically able. Our policy is that athletes must be in attendance for 4 periods on the day of an athletic contest. The Head Coach or an Assistant prior to practice will check attendance on myStudent each day. If you see a pattern of tardiness, please address this with your athletes. The CCHS Athletic Department policy states that you must be in class unless there is a prearranged absence approved by the school administration. If an athlete breaks the policy and it is not discovered until a later date, the athlete will be suspended from the next contest. Coaches may dictate in their policies any additional standards that they feel are necessary. Any emergency situations will be handled on an individual basis by contacting the Athletic Director at [kshoaff@pasco.k12.fl.us](mailto:kshoaff@pasco.k12.fl.us).

## **SPORTSMANSHIP**

1. It is expected that coaches instill sportsmanship in all of our athletes.
2. Discuss in parent meetings sportsmanship and possible consequences to the student and parent that include suspensions and possible fines. Per FHSAA, the first suspension of a player is a warning to the school and if a second suspension follows a fine will be levied to the school that can range from \$250 - \$400. This fee will be initially taken from the two sports that received the suspensions and then will be split between the two players involved in the suspension and must be paid prior to participation in another sport.
3. Discuss the use of the internet with your athletes. The FHSAA is finding that many problems are arising from athletes taunting on Internet sites such as YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook.

New FHSAA Policy- any coach ejected from a contest must complete the NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching Course before the next season.

### **Reminder- it is your responsibility to immediately notify me of any ejections and you are responsible for any and all fines.**

The following guidelines are set forth to assist our administration, parents, students and staff with the monitoring of Cypress Creek High School Athletic program. Please note Article 8.1.1 of the Florida High School Activities Association By-Laws; students, coaches, administrators, spectators and all other persons connected directly or indirectly with a member school, as well as contest officials, shall practice and promote the highest standards of sportsmanship and ethics at all times directly or indirectly related in any manner to interscholastic relationships or events, whether prior to, during or following such relationship or event.

Also please note Article 11.11.2

A student who, prior to, during or following an interscholastic athletic contest, commits an act of a malicious and hateful nature toward a contest official or an opponent, shall be guilty of gross unsportsmanlike conduct and be ineligible to participate in interscholastic athletic competition for a period of six weeks. Such malicious acts shall include, but not be limited to, cursing, striking or threatening a contest official during a contest or at any other time because of resentment over occurrences or decisions during a contest; physical contact with an opponent that is beyond the normal scope of competition and which appears to be with the intent of inflicting bodily harm on the opponent; spitting on a contest official or opponent/ directing gender, racial or ethnic slurs toward a contest official or opponent; or other such acts which may be deemed as unacceptable conduct either by the principal of the member school the student attends or this Association.

Cypress Creek High School may lengthen the suspension if deemed necessary.

\*Note - FHSAA By-Law 9.7.4

The FHSAA has mandated that the home school is responsible for the control of spectators during athletic contests. If in the event that a spectator or spectators create a distraction, they will be removed from the facility and face possible suspension from future athletic events.

In the event that a student is assigned in-school suspension during a particular sport season, the student will be suspended for a minimum of one contest.

**We at CCHS encourage all our supporters and athletes to exhibit sportsmanship and respect for our opponents, their fans, and the officials who are working our contests.**

### **UNIFORMS AND OTHER ISSUED EQUIPMENT**

Students are responsible for the proper care of all equipment issued to them. It is their responsibility to properly care for these items and return them at the end of the season in proper condition. Any of these items not returned must be paid for at the current replacement price (It is standard manufacturer's policy that, when replacing fewer than six uniforms, the cost of each equates to roughly 200% of original cost). Any awards, letters or honors will also be withheld until the student has cleared all debts or uniform responsibilities.

**WHEN WASHING UNIFORMS, AT NO TIME SHOULD BLEACH BE USED! Dry on Low Heat!**

**FHSAA Policy states that school uniforms can't be worn by clubs or off-season leagues**

### **TRAVEL**

**Please plan travel well in advance to ensure all Purchase orders can be completed.**

In most cases, travel to and from athletic contests will be provided on buses. There will, however, be times that private vehicles will be used for this purpose. In either case, athletes will be expected to travel to and from these events with the team. If parents wish to bring their child home instead, permission to do so must be obtained from the coach and this permission will be at his/her discretion. At no time will athletes be permitted to return with anyone other than their parents.

In order to drive the county vans you must complete the online application which is located on the District School Board of Pasco County website and have students complete with their parents the consent form that allows the coach to drive athletes to games, meets, or matches. No buses will be issued for the following schools (Pasco, Zephyrhills, Wesley Chapel, Wiregrass).

### **NCAA REQUIREMENTS FOR SCHOLARSHIP ATHLETES**

The NCAA has requirements for Athletic Scholarships and should be of interest to all parents. It is suggested that you familiarize yourself with these requirements and keep them in mind throughout your high school days, especially when scheduling classes from year to year. The guidance department has a complete copy of these and is more than pleased to help the students with any questions regarding this matter. All NCAA member schools strictly adhere to these requirements.

### **AWARD CEREMONY- Growlers**

The Athletic Department will host this exciting sports awards ceremony. All athletes from all of the sports will come together on this night to be recognized for their success and achievements they experienced during their season.

## **LETTERS AND AWARDS**

**Please submit a copy of your letter criteria to the Athletic Director.**

The following are athletic Department policies outlining what must be done to earn a letter in varsity or junior varsity sports at Cypress Creek High School. Coaches have been instructed to set standards for their individual sport that must be met in order to earn a letter. These standards have been established to make this letter more meaningful.

1. A STUDENT MUST BE ACADEMICALLY ELIGIBLE AND IN GOOD STANDING AT THE END OF THE SEASON TO BE CONSIDERED FOR ANY AWARD(S).
2. EACH HEAD COACH WILL ESTABLISH SET STANDARDS FOR THEIR SPORT THAT EACH ATHLETE MUST MEET TO EARN A LETTER. A COPY OF THESE APPROVED STANDARDS MUST BE GIVEN TO EACH ATHLETE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SEASON.
3. STUDENTS MEETING THE ESTABLISHED CRITERIA FOR A LETTER WILL RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING:
  - A) FIRST TIME LETTERING (VARSITY): LETTER
  - B) FIRST TIME LETTERING IN THAT SPORT: PIN
  - C) SECOND TIME OR AFTER IN THAT SPORT: BAR

## **DRUG-FREE ENVIRONMENT FOR STUDENTS**

The manufacture, distribution, dispensation possession or use of controlled substances; including alcohol, is prohibited on District School Board property or at any sanctioned activity. This offense is a Level III violation of the Student Code of Conduct and may result in the expulsion of the student from Cypress Creek High School or the removal of a coach.

The CCHS Athletic Department policy re: controlled substances is:

First offense - 18 week suspension and mandatory completion of counseling program \*18 week suspension is only counted through the regular school year; summer does not count as part of the 18 weeks.

Second offense - Athlete is dismissed from the athletic program for one calendar year.

If a student is found to be in possession or to have used tobacco products on school board property - student will be subject to District School Board of Pasco County guidelines and will be suspended from a minimum of one athletic contest.

\*FHSAA POLICY ON TOBACCO PRODUCTS

## **USE OF PROFANITY**

The use of profanity, obscene gestures, or abusive language is a Level III (serious breach of conduct) offense of the Student Code of Conduct. At anytime a student or coach shows disrespect toward school officials, contestants, spectators, game officials, teammates or coaches, the student/coach will be suspended for a minimum of one contest.

## **STUDENT ATHLETE OR STUDENT INVOLVED IN EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES BEING ARRESTED AND CHARGED**

If a student has been arrested on or off campus and charged with a misdemeanor other than a minor traffic violation as defined in F.S. 775.08 or a crime that would be a felony if that student was an adult, then that **student will receive a four week suspension from practice and**

**competition the first day the school administration becomes aware of said violation(s). After the suspension expires, the coach and administration will make a decision as to whether that student remains eligible or extend the suspension up to four additional weeks based on supportable information obtained from the police or the state attorney's office. The suspension will be immediately lifted should the charges be dropped.** If the student is adjudicated guilty of a misdemeanor (F.S. 775.08), the student will be ineligible for a period of four weeks from the date of conviction. The four weeks must be part of the regular school year and will not include summer school. If the student enters a plea of "no contest" and adjudication is withheld, then the student will be ineligible for a period of four school weeks from the date the plea is entered into the court records.

If the student is found to be "not guilty", the student may resume eligibility from the date the charges are dropped or that the "not guilty" is entered into court records.

**If the student is adjudicated guilty of a crime that would be a felony if that student was an adult, then that student will be ineligible for a period of no less than eighteen school weeks from the date of conviction.** If the student enters a plea of "no contest" to the felony charge, the student will be ineligible for a period of no less than eighteen school weeks from the date the plea is entered into court records. If the student is found "not guilty" to the felony charge, the student may resume eligibility from the date the charges are dropped or a "not guilty" is entered into court records.

#### **STUDENT ARRESTED AND CHARGED WITH A MISDEMEANOR**

The CCHS Athletic Department policy regarding a student charged with a misdemeanor; student eligibility will be suspended pending adjudication.

If the student is found guilty of misdemeanor; student will be ineligible from a period of 4 weeks from the date of conviction.

If the student enters a plea of no-contest; student will be ineligible for a period of 2 weeks from the date the plea is entered into court records.

If the student is found not-guilty; student may resume eligibility from the date charges are dropped or that not-guilty is entered into court records.

If a student enters a diversion program, the student will become eligible upon successful completion of the program.

### **OFF SEASON GUIDELINES**

The CCHS Athletic Department policy regarding off-season programs is:

- 1) Off-season programs during the regular school year will be limited to those agencies recognized by the FHSAA or approved by the school administration
- 2) Summer programs will be limited to those agencies recognized by the FHSAA or approved by the school administration
- 3) An open gym in the summer must follow the guidelines set forth by the FHSAA and school administration
- 4) FHSAA - Policy on summer participation will be strictly enforced.
- 5) All paperwork and approval must be completed prior to any off season sessions.

#### **FHSAA Policy**

**\*\*Off-Season programs are voluntary and participation is not a requirement or an implied requirement. All students participating in offseason programs, including clubs, must have current physical and consent forms.\*\***



## **INSURANCE AND ACCIDENTAL INJURIES**

The Pasco County School Board will provide excess student athletic insurance coverage. The plan provides limited excess coverage for medical expenses that arise from the treatment of accidental injuries incurred while a student participates in interscholastic sports.

**THIS PLAN IS NOT A GUARANTEE OF PAYMENT FOR MEDICAL SERVICES. YOU MAY ENCOUNTER CERTAIN OUT-OF-POCKET EXPENSES WHEN YOUR SON OR DAUGHTER IS TREATED FOR ACCIDENTAL INJURIES.**

### **\*\*\*\*IMPORTANT\*\*\*\***

**All accident reports should be completed at the time of the injury and a parent should be notified immediately.**

**ALL INJURIES MUST BE REPORTED TO THE COACH BEFORE LEAVING PRACTICES OR GAMES.** Do not wait until the following day to report your injury.

**BEFORE SEEING ANY DOCTORS FOR TREATMENT**, the student will need to see the Athletic Director for the necessary school insurance claim form(s).

**Parents your insurance is primary. If you have an HMO or a PPO insurance plan it is absolutely imperative that you follow the procedures as prescribed by your insurance plan should your son or daughter need medical treatment.** In general, this will mean that you will have to take your child to your primary physician for treatment. If this is not done, your insurance will not cover any of the costs incurred and the medical benefits otherwise payable under the Board provided excess student athletic insurance policy shall be reduced by 50%.

**For parents who do not have primary insurance**, we encourage the use of the preferred providers. These medical providers have shown an interest in charging for services in accordance with policy limits in an effort to minimize your out-of-pocket expenses. This Cypress Creek High School Handbook does not cover all situations that may occur in our Athletic Program; however, we have tried to include as many as possible in writing so the athletes and parents understand our expectations. We will strive to do all we can to make sure our student/athletes represent this school and community with dignity and integrity. Participation in extracurricular activities is a privilege, not a right. Any student/athlete who violates a team rule or commits a serious breach of the student code of conduct may be dismissed from the team immediately. The final decision rests with the Coach, Athletic Director, and Principal.

## **FACILITIES**

It is the Head Coaches responsibility to ensure the upkeep and the security of the facilities and equipment. Before leaving the premises, all doors and gates should be locked and all lights turned out. Upkeep of the facilities will ensure that our school will be a model and a place that our athletes can be proud of. If at any time there are needs for the facility, please communicate those needs with the Athletic Director.

## **PRACTICES**

It is your responsibility to set up a practice schedule, and communicate that to your parents. You should also be consistent with your release time. If you tell the parents that practice will end at 6:00PM, do your best to have your athletes ready to leave at 6:00PM.

## **STUDENT SUPERVISION**

It is the Head Coach's responsibility to ensure the proper supervision of our athletes. Whether on our campus or visiting other schools, it is imperative to ensure our athletes represent our programs in a way we can be proud of. Also, it is your responsibility to ensure all of your athletes have transportation home following events or practices. Plan to stay at least 30 minutes following an event to ensure your athletes have been picked up. Communicate this with your parents to ensure that they are prompt when picking up their student

## **SAFETY**

It is the Head Coach's responsibility to ensure the safety of the athletes. Please ensure transportation and facility rules are being followed. If you see lightning, get your athletes indoors immediately. Do not return to the fields until the area has been lightning free for 30 Minutes. The athletic trainer's word on weather is final.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

1. Bus/Van Requests must be turned in a week after tryouts.
2. Transportation request must be filled out completely
3. Turn in completed transportation requests to Athletic Director
4. Confirmation- You must always confirm your transportation requests to ensure you will have transportation. The day before your travel, you will call x40402 to confirm your transportation.
5. In order to drive the county vans you must complete the online application which is located on the District School Board of Pasco County website and have students complete with their parents the consent form that allows the coach to drive athletes to games, meets, or matches.

## **Finances**

\*\*At no time is money collected from fundraising, concessions, donations, or gates to be taken off the premises. All District policies must be followed when handling funds.\*\*

## **CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN**

### **CATASTROPHIC INJURY**

- \* Contact 911
- \* Refer to direction from Athletic Trainer on premises.
- \* Contact Athletic Director  
Tico Hernandez, 8132446998
- \* Contact Administration
- \* Contact family by appropriate individual (use assistance as needed):
- \* Coordinated media plan  
NO CONTACT WITH MEDIA from the athletic staff
- \* Meeting with athletes to discuss situation  
NO OUTSIDE DISCUSSION OF MEETING WITH MEDIA
- \* Complete documentation of events (include everyone involved with signatures)
- \* Collect and secure all equipment and materials involved
- \* Construct a detailed timeline of events related to the incident
- \* Involve appropriate counseling and ministerial personnel
- \* Assign athletic staff member to be with family at all times upon arrival; assist family as needed; protect from outside persons
- \* Critical incident stress debriefing/ counseling as necessary for individuals involved in incident

### **AED LOCATIONS**

- Field House electric room next to concession stand
- Gym- Outside Storage area

- Clinic
- Cafeteria

## **HEAT**

- All sports shall have an open water policy
- Students will be removed from the field when heat/humidity guidelines dictate
- If student shows signs of heat stress, exhaustion, or stroke, cool the student down immediately with ice and cold towels

## **INJURIES**

- Must contact parent or guardian by phone or in person
- Complete injury report and turn in to AD by the next day

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER PROCEDURES**

### **GENERAL POLICY**

In the case of inclement weather (i.e. thunderstorms/lightning, hail, hurricane, tornado), it will be under the direct discretion of the on-site administrator or coach, if no administrator is present, to determine if the practice/game fields should be evacuated. Exceptions will be made for golf and swimming, whereby the head coach will have to suspend activity in the absence of an administrator.

### **LIGHTNING**

Lightning is a dangerous phenomenon. CCHS has developed a lightning policy to minimize the risk of injury from lightning strike to Cypress Creek athletes, coaches, support staff and fans. inclement. For this reason, the following guidelines must be observed if it appears that lightning is possible for the area:

1. If inclement weather is forecasted for the area or sighted in the area, the coach or administrator will get a weather update via the National Weather Service on the Internet. Internet sites are as follows:

<http://www.weather.com/>  
<http://www.accuweather.com/>  
<http://www.lightningsafety.com/>

2. If lightning is detected, with two subsequent readings within 30 seconds on the detector at 3-8 mile range regardless of the presence of visible lightning, all athletes and personnel must evacuate the fields and/ tennis courts and seek shelter.

3. If no safe structure is within a reasonable distance, then other safe areas include: enclosed buildings, fully enclosed metal vehicles with windows up (no convertibles or golf carts. Unsafe shelter areas: water, open fields, dugouts, golf carts, metal objects (bleachers, fences, etc.), individual tall trees, light poles. AVOID BEING THE HIGHEST OBJECT IN AN OPEN FIELD. \*\*\*Athletes/coaches etc. should not stand in groups or near a single tree. There should be 15 ft between athletes (NLSI, 2000).

Note: sports that use metal equipment. Golfers drop your clubs and remove shoes, baseball/softball drop bats and remove shoes, tennis drop rackets.

If unable to reach safe shelter, assume a crouched position on the ground with only the balls of the feet touching the ground, wrap your arms around your knees and lower your head. Minimize contact with the ground, because lightning current often enters the victim through the ground rather than by a direct overhead strike. Do not lie flat! If safe shelter is only a short distance away, it has been suggested to run for shelter, rather than stay in middle of field.

4. If a person feels that his/her hair standing on end, they should immediately crouch as described in item # 5. If someone is struck by lightning, activate the Crisis Management Plan (CMP). A person struck by lightning does not carry an electrical charge; immediately initiate the CMP and begin the primary survey. If possible move the victim to a safe location.
5. Avoid using the telephone except in emergency situations. People have been struck by lightning while using a land-line phone. A cellular phone or a portable phone is a safe alternative to land-line phones, if the person and the antenna are located within a safe structure and if all other precautions are followed.