

USSF/North Chapter/North County Lightning Policy

If you suspend play due to weather conditions communicate with both coaches the following policy while seeking shelter as appropriate. Let them know that play will not be resumed until 30 minutes after the last thunder/lightning sighting. As match officials you are required to stay on site (sheltered) as long as the match can still be resumed. If the coaches indicate they will not resume due to weather/time then indicate that on your match report and contact your assignor. It is very likely that there is a match scheduled behind the current one and you may not be able to resume play. Make sure you indicated on your paperwork what time you suspended play, score and your restart positioning. Communication with the coaches and time limits are helpful in making these decisions. Always contact your assignor after/during any match with unusual circumstances.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact the assignor responsible for the match you are officiating.

If a game is delayed for weather, please try and get the game played. Re-scheduling is, as you may well guess, difficult. However, you need to be realistic; the lights may go off, other teams may be scheduled after your game etc. It's possible you may need to shorten the halves; please include the coaches at some point in your discussion, this may resolve some of your questions about whether to play or not given scheduling concerns. Games are considered played in full after so many minutes have been played, but that is not the decision of the referee. Please note on the score sheet at what minute you suspended the game and what the score was. The club administration will determine whether the game needs to be replayed or the score stands. Also the whole crew should make a note in the match report.

Remember that the final decision as to safety lies with the referee once the match has started. If the field conditions are not safe, then don't play the game.

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Please read the following policy regarding weather issues. Thunderstorms are predicted in some areas and we want everyone to be safe. This policy references thunderstorms but works for snow and other conditions as well.

Lightning

a. Recognizing the threat

(1) Apply the 30-30 rule

When you see lightning, count the time until you hear thunder. If this time is 30 seconds or less, seek proper shelter. If you can't see the lightning, just hearing the thunder is a good

back-up rule. Wait 30 minutes or more after hearing the last thunder before leaving shelter.

(2) Know and heed warning systems and community rules

Many communities or park systems have lightning detection and warning systems. Use this information and obey the rules established by the community or park system.

(3) Know and apply the rules or procedures established by the competition authority

(4) Minimize the risk of being struck

Protect the safety of all participants by stopping game activities quickly, so that participants and spectators may retire to a safer place before the lightning threat becomes significant.

Remember, if you can hear the thunder, you are within reach of lightning.

b. Seeking proper shelter

(1) No place outside is safe near thunderstorms

(2) The best shelter is a large, fully enclosed, substantially constructed building. A vehicle with a solid metal roof and metal sides is a reasonable second choice.

c. If there is no proper shelter, avoid the most dangerous locations: Higher elevations; wide open areas, including fields; tall isolated objects, such as trees, poles, or light posts; unprotected open buildings; rain shelters; bus stops; metal fences and metal bleachers.

d. If you cannot avoid these locations, crouch down on the balls of your feet, with your head tucked into your chest and your hands over your ears.

If someone is hit, remember that all deaths from lightning result from cardiac arrest and stopped breathing. CPR and mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, respectively, are the recommended first aid.

Referees should become involved in such assistance only if they have proper training.

e. Remain calm. A calm official will often be able to prevent panic by young players.

Thank you for your attention to this policy.