

## USSF Lightning Policy/Protocol

### Lightning or Thunder Policy

#### 1) Recognizing the threat

##### a) 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 cannot see the lightning, just hearing the thunder is a good back-up rule. Outdoor activity may resume 30 minutes after the last sound of Thunder or Flash of Lightning. The 30-minute clock restarts every time lightning flashes or thunder sounds.

##### b) 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.

##### c) Seeking proper shelter

No place outside is safe near thunderstorms. 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. 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.

#### 2) Protocol

If you suspend play due to lightning/Thunder, 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. However, you need to be realistic; the lights may go off, other teams may be scheduled after your game, the referees may need to go to another assignment etc. It is 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. If the coaches indicate they will not resume due to weather/time then indicate that on your match report and contact your assignor. Make sure you have indicated on your paperwork what time you suspended play, score of the match, and your restart positioning. Communication with the coaches and time limits are helpful in making these decisions. The club administration will determine whether the game needs to be replayed or the score stands.

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 do not continue the match.

Here is your reference with USSF Lightning Policy:

<https://www.recognizetorecover.org/lightning-severe-weather>