



## LIGHTNING AND SEVERE WEATHER POLICY

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Rev.	0
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Checker	I. Toellner
Approver:	C. Craig
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When inclement weather is forecast all Big Country Soccer Association members active at any outdoor facility should be observant of weather conditions. When severe weather that includes thunder or lightning is expected these general guidelines will be followed. **The safety of all field patrons is paramount.**

### ***Member's Sports Fields***

- Upon hearing thunder, the officials (referees) shall suspend the game and clear the field. If thunder can be heard, then there is a risk of being struck by lightning.
- Officials shall direct participants and spectators to go to their vehicles or some other enclosed substantial structure (dugouts and picnic shelters are not suitable, safe structures during a thunderstorm).
- Persons will not be permitted to re-enter the field of play until 30-minutes after the last time thunder was heard.
- If a member's volunteer is on site and inclement weather is likely before games start the volunteer(s) shall confirm with the officials the policy on lightning and severe weather.
- Upon hearing thunder, the member's volunteer in attendance shall notify the officials and identify the direction it came from.
- Big Country Soccer Association members shall give the officials the opportunity to suspend or terminate the game.
- If the officials take no action in a reasonable amount of time (within minutes) and severe weather persists, Big Country Soccer Association member volunteer in attendance of the soccer activity shall notify all participants the need to proceed to their vehicles or other enclosed substantial structure.

### ***Additional Information***

Please note the following recommendations from Environment Canada:

- To plan for a safe day, check the weather forecast first. If thunderstorms are forecast, avoid being outdoors at that time or make an alternate plan. Identify safe places and determine how long it will take you to reach them.
- Watch the skies for developing thunderstorms and listen for thunder. As soon as you hear thunder, quickly get to a safe location. If you can hear thunder, you are in danger of being hit by lightning. More people are struck before and after a thunderstorm than during one.
- Get to a safe place. A safe location is a fully enclosed building with wiring and plumbing. Sheds, picnic shelters, tents or covered porches do NOT protect you from lightning. If no sturdy building is close by, get into a metal-roofed vehicle and close all the windows.



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- Do not handle electrical equipment, telephones, or plumbing. These are all electrical conductors. Using a computer or wired video game system, taking a bath, or touching a metal window frame all put you at risk of being struck by lightning. Use battery-operated appliances only.
- If caught outdoors far from shelter, stay away from tall objects. This includes trees, poles, wires, and fences. Take shelter in a low-lying area but be on the alert for possible flooding.

### **Severe Storms/ High Winds**

Severe storms can produce high winds, heavy rain, hail, lightning, thunder and/ or tornados. If a severe storm approaches the playing area, the safety of the players is the number one priority of coaches and Match Officials and may require that the game be suspended while shelter is sought. In the event the game is suspended, ALL participants MUST clear the field immediately and move into their cars or other permanent shelter.

High winds can create problems by dust and debris being in the air or blowing over objects. Heavy rain can create hazardous field conditions or lead to flash flooding. Hail can cause injury. Tornados are obvious dangers of any severe storm. Use common sense and seek shelter as appropriate.

### **Extreme Heat**

When temperatures and humidity rise above normal levels, the potential for risk rises. Be aware of these dangers and be prepared to stop or delay games to ensure proper hydration. Coaches during practices and Match Officials during games to allow for frequent water stoppages in addition to substitution stoppages (during games). Incidents of dehydration, heat exhaustion, heatstroke and sunburn are avoidable. The proper and continued hydration of players and volunteers is essential starting at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled event.

Sunscreen of appropriate strength should be applied frequently. Plenty of shade should be provided to participants by trees, tents, or buildings. Scheduling of games outside of the hottest part of the day, whenever possible, is preferred. When scheduling multiple games in a day or over several days when conducting tournaments, BCSA recommends that there are at least two hours between games and only two games per day for players is strongly recommended.

### **Practice Conditions**

Due to the risks associated lightning and severe weather, coaches are not permitted to practice in conditions that are in non-compliance with this policy and/ or as advised by Environment Canada alerts and bulletins. The health and safety of players is the number one priority therefore this policy must be observed.

### **Reference**

Canada Soccer Association Lightning Safety/ Severe Weather Policy