



Halifax Dunbrack Soccer Club

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

In accordance with *Canada Soccer's Lightning/Severe Weather Policy*, *Halifax Dunbrack Soccer Club* (HDSC) is committed to the safety of its players, coaches, management and spectators in any weather event that occurs during all HDSC activities, training, programs, and matches sanctioned by Soccer Nova Scotia and Canada Soccer.

PURPOSE

HDSC is committed to the health and safety of all our members. At times, weather can impact the safety of our players and members. To help guide the steps needed in the case of severe weather related issues, we have adopted *Canada Soccer's Lightning/Severe Weather policy*, as well as identified other related weather issues that may impact the safety of HDSC members.

Definitions

Athlete: an athlete is defined as all persons who are members of or play on a soccer team or participate in soccer programs with HDSC

Persons in Authority: is defined as those persons in positions of authority, such as roles as coach, assistant coach, team manager, executive member, administrator, referee, or any Persons of Authority who works with, for, or around athletes

Vulnerable Participant: includes Minors and vulnerable adults (people who, because of age, disability or other circumstance, are in a position of dependence on others or are otherwise at a greater risk than the general population of being harmed by people in positions of trust or authority)

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT

This *Inclement Weather Policy* applies to all HDSC members involved in the game (including Persons of Authority, Athletes, and parents and guardians of vulnerable participants or those under the age of majority) who should be able to effectively identify and respond to extreme weather scenarios.

PROCEDURE

In the case of poor weather, it is advised to watch social media or proper channels for updates related to fields managed by *Halifax Regional Municipality* (HRM). Field condition updates are made daily. It is mandatory that our members follow the requirements of HRM. If HRM does not close fields, it will be up to HDSC staff to make their own decisions based on what they feel at the time is best for their members safety. You can find field condition updates here:

<https://www.halifax.ca/parks-recreation/facility-rentals-bookings-field-conditions/field-conditions>



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Training and Programs

HDSC will make every attempt to announce decisions regarding severe weather at a minimum of one (1) hour prior to the start of scheduled activities. In the event that weather circumstances change (i.e. suddenly or unexpectedly), Persons of Authority overseeing activities, training, and programs will be responsible for determining whether to delay or cancel. Persons of Authority are expected to monitor *Environment Canada* prior to scheduled activities to plan for safe activities.

Games

The leagues will monitor weather conditions and announce game cancellations. In the event the league(s) do not issue weather related cancellations prior to kickoff, or weather conditions change, the referee has the final say over delaying or restarting a match due to weather. Waiting to stop play or not waiting to start play may result in a serious injury or loss of life. Referees are expected to act responsibly when dealing with such events during matches they are controlling.

Extreme Weather Conditions

LIGHTNING

30/30 RULE - If you can hear thunder, you can get hit by lightning. As soon as you hear thunder, quickly get to a safe location. More people are struck before and after a thunderstorm than during one. Stay inside for 30 minutes after the last rumble of thunder.

Please note the following recommendations from Environment Canada:

- The existence of blue sky and absence of rain are not protection from lightning. Lightning can and does strike as far as ten (10) miles away from the rain shaft.
- It does not have to be raining for lightning to strike. Many lightning casualties occur in the beginning, as the storm approaches, because many people ignore initial precursors of high winds, some rainfall and cloud cover.
- Generally, the lightning threat diminishes with time after the last sound of thunder, but may persist for more than thirty (30) minutes.
- Lightning can strike ahead of the parent cloud – take action even if the thunderstorm is not overhead. Be aware of how close lightning is occurring.
- The flash-to-bang method is the easiest and most convenient way to estimate how far away lightning is occurring. Thunder always accompanies lightning, even though its audible range can be diminished due to background noise in the immediate environment and its distance from the observer.
- Lightning awareness should be increased with the first flash of lightning or the first clap of thunder, no matter how far away. This activity must be treated as a wake-up call to all.
- The most important aspect to monitor is how far away the lightning is occurring, and how fast the storm is approaching, relative to the distance of a safe shelter.
- Recognize that personal observation of lightning may not be sufficient. Additional weather information may be required to ensure consistency, accuracy and adequate advance warning.



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- When larger groups are involved, the time needed to properly evacuate an area increases. As time requirements change, the distance at which lightning is noted and considered a threat to move into the area must be increased. Extending the range used to determine threat potential also increases the chance that a localized cell or thunderstorm may not reach the area giving the impression of a “false alarm”.
- Know where the closest “safe structure or location” is to the field or playing area and know how long it takes to get to that safe structure or location.
- Safe structure or location is defined as: Any building normally occupied or frequently used by people, i.e., a building with plumbing and / or electrical wiring that acts to electrically ground the structure. Avoid using shower facilities for safe shelter and do not use the showers or plumbing facilities during a thunderstorm. In the absence of a sturdy, frequently inhabited building, any vehicle with a hard metal roof (not a convertible or golf cart) and rolled-up windows can provide a measure of safety.
- A vehicle is certainly better than remaining outdoors. It is not the rubber tires that make a vehicle a safe shelter, but the hard metal roof which dissipates the lightning strike around the vehicle. Do not touch the sides of any vehicle!
- If no safe structure or location is within a reasonable distance, find a thick grove of small trees surrounded by taller trees or a dry ditch. 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 a victim through the ground rather than by a direct overhead strike. Minimize your body’s surface area and the ground! Do not lie flat!
- If unable to reach safe shelter, stay away from the tallest trees or objects such as light poles or flag poles), metal objects (such as fences or bleachers), individual trees, standing pools of water, and open fields. Avoid being the highest object in a field. Do not take shelter under a single, tall tree.
- Avoid using the telephone, except in emergency situations. People have been struck by lightning while using a land-line telephone. A cellular phone or a portable remote phone is a safe alternative to land-line phones, if the person and the antenna are located within a safe structure or location, and if all other precautions are followed.
- When considering resumption of any athletics activity, it is recommended that everyone should ideally wait at least thirty (30) minutes after the last flash of lightning or sound of thunder before returning to the field.
- People who have been struck by lightning do not carry an electrical charge. Therefore, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is safe for the responder. If possible, an injured person should be moved to a safer location before starting CPR.
- Lightning-strike victims who show signs of cardiac or respiratory arrest need emergency help quickly. Prompt, aggressive CPR has been highly effective for the survival of victims of lightning strikes. For additional information the following website is helpful: www.weatheroffice.gc.ca



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HEAT

With the changing climate conditions, HDSC has seen an increase in the number of high heat days during the outdoor playing season. To ensure a safe and enjoyable playing experience, HDSC shall govern activities/training sessions in the following manner with respect to high and/or extreme heat.

Where the air temperatures (including the Humidex) reach the following thresholds one (1) hour prior to a match or training, HDSC shall take the following actions:

Humidex Value	Discomfort At Rest	Risk of Overheating During Exercise Activity	Modifications
BELOW 24C	None	Low	N/A
25-29C	None	Low to Moderate	Drink breaks should be considered
30-34C	Some	Athletes should be monitored	Drink breaks or cooling breaks midway through each half of training
35-39C	High	Athletes should be monitored closely	Cooling breaks midway through each half or training AND consider reduced game or training length or cancellation
40C +	EXTREME	EXTREME	ALL ACTIVITY CANCELED

Proper Hydration

The goal in participating in hot weather is to avoid fluid loss from the body or dehydration. Water not only accounts for some 98% of our body composition, but functions to help deliver oxygen to working muscles, and keeps the body from overheating during strenuous activity. Hard working muscles generate heat which is dissipated through the act of sweating. Evaporation of sweat on the skin allows the body to get rid of this heat and cool it off. Avoid dehydration and make sure you pre-hydrate: Don't wait till you feel thirsty because the body will not be able to tell you in time that you are dehydrated, here are some practical recommendations:

- 2 hours before exercise, drink at least 16 oz or 500 ml (an average bottle of water)
- 1 hour before exercise, drink at least 08 oz or 250 ml (half an average bottle of water)
- During the exercise, drink at least 4 to 8 oz every 15-20 minutes
- Immediately after the exercise, drink at least 16 oz or 500 ml of water or an electrolyte replacing drink
- 1 hour after a training session or game consider drinking 16 oz or 500 ml of skim milk or chocolate milk for protein and muscle repair



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As a rule of thumb you should drink at least 500 ml for every 20 lbs of body weight, therefore, someone weighing 140 lbs needs to drink at least 3500 ml of fluid per day if training or playing that day. Drinking carbohydrate and electrolyte fluids may be beneficial in avoiding heat trauma. Wearing light breathable clothing is advised.

Below is a list of some of the early warning signs to look for:

- Flushed face
- Hyperventilation or shortness of breath
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Tingling arms
- Goosebumps (hair on arms standing on end)
- Chilliness & Poor coordination
- Confusion, agitation, uncooperativeness

Heat Stroke – is a medical emergency due to a failure of the heat – controlling mechanism. It may occur merely as a result of exposure to heat. Signs & Symptoms include – mental confusion, headache, poor coordination, delirium, convulsions and death. The body temperature may be 106 F or 40.5 C or higher, the skin is usually hot and dry as the sweating mechanism has failed. Call 911 and transport to a local Hospital.

COLD

It is recommended that activities, programs, and training be canceled when the air temperature is less than 5 degrees celsius and when the wind chill is less than -16 degrees celsius. Athletes are encouraged to wear appropriate clothing to help ensure they stay warm, but all apparel must ensure Athletes do not create a safety hazard for themselves or others, as well as allow for appropriate movement. Dressing appropriately for weather can help reduce injuries and Persons of Authority with HDSC may dismiss athletes from training if they are not dressed appropriately for the weather.

AIR QUALITY

If the *Air Quality Health Index* (AQHI) is "3" or below, continue training as normal.

If the AQHI is "4-6", adjust practice by doing the following:

- Reducing intensity
- Reducing the duration
- Provide resting periods

If the AQHI is "7" or above, practices should be rescheduled.



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Notes: To check the AQHI in your area visit search online for: "Government of Nova Scotia Air Quality Health Index"

SEVERE WEATHER (EX. WINTER STORM, HURRICANE, ICE, ETC.)

In addition to lightning and thunder, severe storms can produce very high winds, heavy rain, hail and snow. If a severe storm approaches the playing area, Persons of Authority are expected to make a decision regarding delays or cancellations. Waiting to stop play or not waiting to start play may result in a serious injury or loss of life. Persons of Authority are expected to act responsibly when dealing with such events. Examples of severe weather include:

- Blizzards/snow (ex. where facilities are closed and/or roads and highways are deemed dangerous, driving advisories issued)
- Hurricanes or Tropical storms
- Ice/Hail
- Wind (i.e. winds exceeding 60 km/hr)
- Heavy rain (ex. Where rain impedes visibility and safety, flooding risks)

Related Documents:

Refund Policy

References:

https://www.canadasoccer.com/wp-content/uploads/resources/Referee/EN/Lightning_Policy_EN.pdf

HDSC Policy and Procedures: Inclement Weather

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