



VSA Weather & Conditions Policy Summary

Updated Oct. 2017

INTRODUCTION

The safety of players, coaches, management and spectators is the primary concern in any weather event that occurs during all matches sanctioned by VSA. By understanding and following the below information, the safety of everyone shall be greatly increased. Ultimately 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.

VSA POLICY

1. The only time a game or practice is cancelled is due to thunder and lightning, weather warnings/watches, periods of elevated air pollution, severe storms, or poor field conditions (i.e. water pooling on the field, frozen field, snow cover, etc).

Rain or showers do not cancel or postpone a game or practice.

- 1.1. ***THE DECISION TO CANCEL GAMES IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE REFEREE OR THE LOCAL TOWN SOCCER ASSOC.***
- 1.2. ***Under no circumstances is a coach permitted to cancel, reschedule games, or practices due to weather conditions.***
2. Games may be suspended due to severe storms at the decision of the referee.
3. Under hot weather conditions
 - 3.1. Games strategy may need to be adjusted as the heat index rises
 - 3.1.1. In agreement with the game officials go to quarters or shorten the games
 - 3.1.2. Mandatory water breaks (during games and practices)
4. When required due to cold weather additional clothing is permitted
 - 4.1. Allowable Additional Clothing
 - 4.1.1. Layered beneath uniform (*long sleeves, long pants, additional socks*)
 - 4.1.2. Gloves or mittens
 - 4.1.3. Toques without straps
 - 4.1.4. Sweat pants or shirts - *In the case of extremely cold weather, may be worn underneath the uniform,*
 - 4.1.5. Jackets without straps/strings *may be worn under the uniform so that referees can see the player's number in the event of a card being issued.*
 - 4.2. Clothing NOT Allowed
 - 4.2.1. Hooded sweatshirts - *hoods and strings present possibility of being grabbed*
 - 4.2.2. Ear muffs (headbands OK) *plastic or metal part crossing top of head presents potential hazard*
 - 4.2.3. Scarves
5. Under poor air quality health index (AQHI) conditions
 - 5.1. When the AQHI has reached a rating of 7 or greater, the health risk is considered high or very high, games and practices will be postponed
 - 5.2. When the AQHI is rated between 4 and 6, the health risk is considered moderate, games and practices may be postponed at the discretion of the referee or local town soccer association
 - 5.2.1. Individuals who have existing respiratory or cardiovascular illnesses may be very sensitive to even moderate exposure and should consider reducing outdoor activities if experiencing symptoms

Failure to follow this policy will result in fines and may lead to the disqualification of a team and compromise the town association status of good standing.

ADDITIONAL 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. **When lightning is detected, you can determine the distance of lightning in your area by counting the number of seconds between the flash and the first sound of the thunder and dividing by five(5).** This will give you the distance in miles from your location. **If the time is thirty (30) seconds or less, seek proper shelter. Wait thirty (30) minutes or more after hearing the last thunder before leaving the shelter.** If you cannot see the lightning, just hearing the thunder is a good back up rule. **As soon as you hear thunder, quickly get to a safe location.** 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.

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.

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.

Young children, the elderly, those who are active outdoors and individuals with existing respiratory or cardiovascular conditions, are among those considered at an increased health risk during elevated periods of air pollution. The air quality health index (AQHI) is designed to help make decisions to protect your health by limiting exposure to air pollution and adjusting activity levels. For those in the at risk population, it is recommended that strenuous activities outdoors:

- be avoided when the AQHI is 10 or higher.
- be reduced or rescheduled when the AQHI is between 7 and 10.
- be reconsidered only if you are experiencing symptoms when the AQHI is between 4 and 6.