



GUIDELINES ON HANDLING PRACTICES AND CONTESTS DURING LIGHTNING OR THUNDER DISTURBANCES

These guidelines provide a policy to those responsible or sharing duties for making decisions concerning the suspension and restarting of practices and contests based on the presence of lightning or thunder.

PROACTIVE PLANNING

1. Monitor local weather conditions before and during practices and contests
2. Develop an evacuation plan, including identification of appropriate nearby safer areas and determine the amount of time needed to get everyone to a designated safer area:

CRITERIA FOR SUSPENSION AND RESUMPTION OF PRACTICE:

1. When thunder is heard or lightning is seen, the leading edge of the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Suspend practice for at least 30 minutes and vacate the outdoor activity to the previously designated safer location immediately.
2. 30-minute rule. Once play has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or lightning is witnessed* prior to resuming play.
3. Any subsequent thunder or lightning* after the beginning of the 30-minute count will reset the clock and another 30-minute count should begin.
4. When lightning-detection devices or mobile phone apps are available, you should never depend on the reliability of these devices and, thus, hearing thunder or seeing lightning should always take precedence over information from a mobile app or lightning-detection device.
5. Players, coaches, and parents should be reminded of the lightning policy at start of the season

SUSPENSION AND RESUMPTION OF A GAME:

1. The referees' authority begins once they are at the field. Once the game begins, the referees has total control of both the game and the pitch (field). The referee will make the determination about when to stop/suspend the game for lightning, thunder or other safety issues.
2. When thunder is heard or lightning is seen by the referee, the referee will immediately suspend the game for at least 30 minutes. Once the referee has stopped play, everyone should evacuate the field to a safer location immediately.
3. The referee will use the 30-minute rule as stated above.
4. In the event that the weather, field conditions, or loss of daylight prevent the game from being restarted, the referee will inform the coach or team manager of both teams and they will disseminate the information to their players, parents, and spectators.
5. The referees' authority begins once they are at the field. Once the game begins, the referees has total control of the game and the pitch (field). The referee will make the determination about when to stop/suspend the game for weather, field conditions, lack of light, or anything else that prohibits the game from being played safely.

[Note: In some USYSA tournaments, a lighting detector may be used to determine when to suspend/stop play. In those cases, the decision to suspend play for lightning will be made by USYSA tournament officials and the referees should suspend play immediately once they are notified to stop/suspend play.]