



Lightning Facts

- Lightning is dangerous—(obvious)
 - often overlooked as sports risk
- Second leading cause of weather-related deaths in U.S.
- Kills over 100 people each year
- Severely injures hundreds more
- Sports associations & referees need to have a plan in place



Referees Must Make the Hard Calls

- Participants are responsible for their own safety
- But, referees play an important role in minimizing risks



Keys to Making Safe Calls

1. Get EDUCATED—learn about the risks and inform other participants
2. Make a PLAN—know what to do **BEFORE** risk presents
3. Keep it in PERSPECTIVE—put safety above all else—**IT'S JUST A GAME**



Action Plan

- Develop a plan ahead of time and stick to it
- The plan should apply to all activities—warm up, and game

Include details about:

- Who is in charge
- When to stop play
- Where to go
- When to resume play

WHO IS IN CHARGE?

- Establish chain of command with one person designated to watch weather (may be a referee or competition authority, but decide in advance)

Person in charge:

- Observe / be aware of conditions at all times
- Monitor the forecast / Nat'l Weather Service warnings, watches
- Stop play if dangerous conditions exist
- Remove participants from field
- Warn spectators to seek shelter
- Provide information on shelter
- Keep participants informed so they can make responsible decisions

When to Stop Play?

- Use common sense / good judgment
- Put SAFETY FIRST
- Postpone / suspend if thunderstorm appears imminent
 - Darkening clouds
 - High winds
 - Sudden increase in humidity
- Because lightning can strike up to 10 miles from a storm, you should seek safe shelter as soon as you hear thunder or see lightning.



Where to Go?

- No place is absolutely safe
- Some places are better than others
 - Large, enclosed structures (plumbing, electrical wiring, phone lines)
 - Vehicle—not first choice, but can be reasonable alternative IF
 - Metal roof
 - Fully enclosed
 - Avoid metal surfaces within car
 - Not golf cart or convertible



AVOID

- Areas of high elevation
- Wide open areas (contest fields)
- Tall, isolated objects (trees, poles)
- Metal fences / bleachers
- Unprotected buildings—dugouts, picnic pavilions, rain shelters, bus stops



When to Resume Play?

- Wait AT LEAST 30 minutes after last lightning seen or thunder heard
- If at minute 25, see / hear more activity, start the count over
- Do NOT rely on clear sky, lack of rainfall



When to Resume Play?

- Even if storm moved on, lightning risk may remain because storm can be miles from lightning
- Do not shorten the 30 minute rule
- Do not resume play if any threat remains