

Lightning Safety Guidelines



Scope:

The purpose of this document is to provide coaches with advice around training and the playing of matches when there is (a risk of) thunder and lightning in the area. This document exists independent of the protocols dealing with weather alerts and would super cede those protocols when thunder and lightning is a risk.

Protocols/ Restrictions:

- When there is a weather forecast of thunder and lightning in the area the time in relation to your event (training or matches) must be considered.
- Should the forecast overlap with your event the advice would be to postpone said event.
- When the forecast exists outside the times of your event, then vigilance must be applied throughout.

Guidelines for the evacuation of playing fields due to thunder and lightning during an event.

In the absence of a forecast for thunder and lightning, or your event occurs outside of a forecast time the following protocols should be followed.

- **Shelter should be sought when there are 30 seconds or less between the flash and the associated thunder clap.**
- Thunderstorms have a tendency to reverse course and come back over an area that that they have just passed. Recommendations on best practice also state that **it should only be considered safe to return to the field of play a minimum of 30 minutes after the final flash of lightning or clap of thunder has been seen/heard.**

The above steps would dictate that in most cases this would mean an end to the majority of training sessions. In the case of matches that have begun specific advice should be sought from the competition organiser.

Safe locations include:

- Large substantial buildings (**The Clubhouse**)
- Fully enclosed metal vehicles which are earthed (**such as cars & buses**) to guide the current around the occupants.

Unsafe areas and situations include:

- Open spaces, especially where large numbers of people are assembled together;
- Close vicinity to large structures or trees;
- Small permanent and temporary structures and shelters especially metal structures;
- Under a single tree or a small group of trees;
- Close to a large body of water;
- In open areas;
- Close to antenna towers;
- Anything that increases a person's height (umbrellas etc.);
- Use of any type of telephone.

(this list is non exhaustive and in the event of an evacuation it advised to get to one of the above mentioned safe areas)