

With the majority of standard rules football being outdoor in nature, contingency or cancellation procedures should be in place in case the weather is unsuitable, or unsafe.

Thunderstorms can occur at any time of the year.

One of the most significant aspects of thunderstorms can be the localised nature of the impacts they could bring.

This includes heavy rainfall, hail, sudden gusty winds, standing water and of course lightning.

Here are some top tips for staying safe:

PLANNING

- Regularly check weather forecasts in the days and hours leading up to an event. Make this a standard part of match prep!
- Create contingency arrangements that can be used in the event of bad weather. For example, could today's activities be moved indoors into a classroom, gym, etc?
- Prior to the event, identify an area where people can shelter safely.
- Be clear who, in the worst-case scenario, has the final say as to whether a specific activity goes ahead or is abandoned. People won't be happy if you have to postpone, but safety ALWAYS comes first.



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DURING A THUNDERSTORM

When you hear thunder, you could already be within range of where the next ground flash may occur.

240,000 people are hit by lightning every year!

- As a storm approaches, the distance can be estimated by measuring the time between lightning flashes and the rumble of thunder. Lightning appears almost simultaneously, while thunder travels at 1 km per 3 seconds.
 - So, a three-second delay between lightning and thunder means that the storm is about 1 km away; a six-second delay means that the storm is about 2 km away.

- Count the seconds between seeing lightning and hearing thunder
If it is less than 30 seconds between the flash and the bang, there is a threat!

If possible, go indoors or get inside a car (not a convertible) as quickly as possible.

- **Avoid water** and find a low-lying open place that is a safe distance from trees, poles, or metal objects
- **Be aware of metal object's** that can attract lightning e.g., brollies, wires or metal fencing...
- If you find yourself in an exposed location it may be advisable to squat close to the ground, keep your heels together, with your hands over your ears/head and with your head tucked down towards your knees.

In simple terms, try to touch as little of the ground with your body as possible. Do not lie down on the ground.

- If you feel your hair stand on end, drop to the above position **immediately**.
- It is safe to touch someone who has been struck by lightning and provide them with CPR and First Aid.

Anyone struck by lightning should always seek medical advice.

- You should wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder before resuming outdoor activities, as the electrical current can remain in the cloud cover.

If the weather makes activity unsafe, **activity should be abandoned.**

Further guidance can be found here, from the NSPCC Child Protection in Sport:
<https://thecpsu.org.uk/resource-library/best-practice/safeguarding-at-events-weather-considerations/>

