

AYSO Region 300 Thunder & Lightning Policy

Sports fields can be one of the most dangerous places to be during a thunderstorm storm. There is limited protection and humans are often the "tallest object" in the area. Extra precaution is necessary.

The United States Soccer Federation (USSF) position is that if you can hear thunder you are within reach of lightning and that referees must protect the safety of all participants by stopping game activities quickly, so that participants and spectators may retire to a safer place before the lightning threat becomes significant. Applying the 30-30 rule is recommended and to wait 30 minutes or more after hearing the last thunder before leaving shelter.

The AYSO National Referee Commission position regarding severe weather states: "It is said that lightning can strike from a clear blue sky that is within a ten mile radius of a storm. It is therefore strongly recommended that practices and games be terminated immediately upon hearing thunder or seeing lightning".

In view of the above, the following is the position of AYSO Region 300 regarding severe weather and is to be instituted by coaches and referees at all practices, games and other AYSO sponsored events:

AYSO 300 will not cancel entire days or remaining games due to active thunderstorms in our area, as these storms can be scattered and often pass through quickly. Decisions relative to severe weather are made at the fields. Regardless of the weather overhead, when thunder is heard and/or lightning is seen, suspend play and direct participants to a safe area by following the guidelines below. At parks with lightening sensors, obey all sirens and strobes. Play may resume 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard/lightning seen or when lightening detection system gives "All Clear" and strobe turns off.

Areas considered safe

- Inside a fully enclosed metal vehicle with windows up
- Inside a substantial building (roof and four walls)

Unsafe Areas

- Small buildings including picnic shelters and the open area of a concession stand
- Anywhere near metallic objects like flagpoles, antennas, towers, underground watering systems, soccer goals, metal bleachers, electric equipment
- Open fields, trees and water

Open area without shelter

- Avoid standing in groups
- Spread out to reduce risk
- Crouch on your feet, keep your head low
- Avoid being the tallest object
- Avoid lying on the ground

If a strike occurs to an individual

- Call 911
- If you are qualified to do so, apply First Aid or CPR immediately
- People struck by lightning do not carry an electrical charge and are safe to touch

Restarting after the All-Clear (30 minutes after the last boom is heard or strike is seen)

- Games which have completed the first half will be considered finished and the score at the time play was suspended shall be the final score.
- Games which have completed less than one half; the referee will resume by starting the second half, reducing the remaining time if necessary so that the match ends at the scheduled time.