



GDRC

Lightning Safety & Severe Weather Policy

Purpose

The safety of players, coaches, umpires and spectators is the primary concern in any weather event that occurs during all games sanctioned by the GDRC.

By understanding and following the below information provided by Environment Canada, the safety of everyone shall be greatly increased. Ultimately the umpire and the GDRC Program Director or GDRC Representative will have the final say over delaying or restarting a game due to weather. Waiting to stop play or not waiting to start play may result in a serious injury or loss of life. Umpires and GDRC Program Director or GDRC Representatives are expected to act responsibly when dealing with such events during games they are controlling.

When thunder roars, go indoors

You can determine the approximate distance of lightning from your area by counting the number of seconds between the flash and the first sound of the thunder and dividing by three (3). This will give you the distance in kilometers from your location.

The problem lies in that people need to be in a safe location (not a dugout!) before the count reaches 30. For instance, if one counts 35 seconds, people should be finding a safe location to shelter in.

Additional Information

Please note the following recommendations from Environment Canada:

The existence of blue sky and absence of rain are not protection from lightning. Lightning can and does strike as far as ten (15) kilometers away from the rain shaft. It does not have to be raining for lightning to strike. Many lightning casualties occur in the beginning, as the storm approaches, because many people ignore initial precursors of high winds, some rainfall and cloud cover, or after the system moves past. The risk of being struck by lightning may persist for more than thirty (30) minutes so shelter in place until 30 minutes after the last rumble of thunder.



Lightning can strike ahead or behind the parent cloud – take action even if the thunderstorm is not overhead.

Be aware of how close lightning is occurring. The flash-to-bang method is the easiest and most convenient way to estimate how far away lightning is occurring. Thunder always accompanies lightning, even though its audible range can be diminished due to background noise in the immediate environment and its distance from the observer.

Lightning awareness should be increased with the first flash of lightning or the first clap of thunder, no matter how far away. This activity must be treated as a wake-up call to all. The most important aspect to monitor is how far away the lightning is occurring, and how fast the storm is approaching, relative to the distance of a safe shelter for everyone.

Recognize that personal observation of lightning may not be sufficient. Additional weather information may be required to ensure consistency, accuracy and adequate advance warning. There is a Canadian Lightning Danger Map available at http://weather.gc.ca/lightning/index_e.html that can help identify where recent lightning has struck.

When larger groups are involved, the time needed to properly evacuate an area increases. As time requirements change, the distance at which lightning is noted and considered a threat to move into the area must be increased. Extending the range used to determine threat potential also increases the chance that a localized cell or thunderstorm may not reach the area giving the impression of a “false alarm”.

Know where the closest “safe structure or location” is to the field or playing area and know how long it takes to get to that safe structure or location.

Safe structure or location is defined as:

Any building normally occupied or frequently used by people, i.e., a building with plumbing and / or electrical wiring that acts to electrically ground the structure. Avoid using the showers or plumbing facilities during a thunderstorm.

In the absence of a sturdy, frequently inhabited building, any vehicle with a hard metal roof (not a convertible or golf cart) and rolled-up windows can provide a measure of safety. A vehicle is certainly better than remaining outdoors. It is not the rubber tires that make a vehicle a safe shelter, but the hard metal roof which dissipates the lightning strike around the vehicle. Do not touch the sides of any vehicle!



Avoid using the telephone, except in emergency situations. People have been struck by lightning while using a land-line telephone. A cellular phone or a portable remote phone is a safe alternative to land-line phones, if the person and the antenna are located within a safe structure or location, and if all other precautions are followed.

When considering resumption of any athletics activity, it is recommended that everyone should ideally wait at least thirty (30) minutes after the last sound of thunder before returning to the field.

People who have been struck by lightning do not carry an electrical charge. Therefore, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is safe for the responder. If possible, an injured person should be moved to a safer location before starting CPR. Lightning-strike victims who show signs of cardiac or respiratory arrest need emergency help quickly. Prompt, aggressive CPR has been highly effective for the survival of victims of lightning strikes.

For additional information, the following websites are helpful:

Canadian Lightning Danger Map: https://weather.gc.ca/lightning/index_e.html Lightning safety for soccer video:

<http://www.ec.gc.ca/foudrelightning/default.asp?lang=En&n=54B219E5-1> Lightning safety for large outdoors venue:

<http://www.ec.gc.ca/foudrelightning/default.asp?lang=En&n=90CC153A-1> Lightning in Canada: <http://www.ec.gc.ca/foudrelightning/default.asp?lang=En&n=BEC25F94-1>