



LIGHTNING & SEVERE WEATHER POLICY

PURPOSE

Stonewall Sports Detroit is committed to providing a safe environment for all participants, officials, volunteers, and spectators. This policy establishes procedures for suspending, delaying, resuming, postponing, relocating, shortening, or canceling league activities when weather or environmental conditions create an unreasonable risk of harm.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Stonewall Sports Detroit outdoor league games, practices, tournaments, clinics, and other sanctioned activities. It applies to participants, umpires, volunteers, and, where applicable, spectators.

1. AUTHORITY & WEATHER MONITORING

- For each event, Stonewall Sports Detroit shall designate the Sports Director as the Weather Safety Officer. The Weather Safety Officer is responsible for monitoring weather and environmental conditions before and during play and for enforcing this policy.
- The Sports Director may consult with the Sports Lead(s), and/or Board members, when assessing weather conditions and determining whether play should proceed, be delayed, suspended, postponed, relocated, shortened, or canceled.
- If the Sports Director is unavailable, they may appoint someone, i.e. the Sports Lead(s) or Board Member, to act as the Weather Safety Officer and make time-sensitive safety decisions in accordance with this policy.
- Stonewall Sports Detroit may cancel games in advance when available weather information indicates that unsafe weather conditions are likely to occur before or during scheduled play. When possible, advance cancellation decisions should be communicated no later than one (1) hour before the scheduled game start time. This decision will be made by the Sports Director.
- Immediate safety decisions may be made at any time, including less than one (1) hour before game time or during play, when weather conditions warrant prompt action.
- Any individual acting under this policy in the interest of participant safety shall be supported in that decision.
- The Weather Safety Officer; Sports Director(s), Sports Lead(s), or designee shall monitor available weather information before and during activities, including local forecasts, radar, National Weather Service information, and, when available, validated lightning detection tools or weather applications.



2. IMMEDIATE SUSPENSION OF PLAY FOR LIGHTNING & THUNDER

- All outdoor activities shall be suspended immediately when any of the following occurs:
 - » Lightning is observed
 - » Thunder is heard
 - » A validated lightning detection tool or weather application if available, indicates lightning within ten (10) miles of the venue, even if lightning has not yet been observed or thunder heard
- The occurrence of lightning or thunder is not subject to interpretation or debate. If the Weather Safety Officer; the Sports Director(s), Sports Lead(s), umpire, or designated representative observes lightning or hears thunder, play shall stop immediately. The decision to suspend play shall be made in the interest of safety and shall stand regardless of whether other individuals personally observed the lightning or heard the thunder.
- Direct observation and audible thunder always take precedence over any application, device, or forecast.

3. EVACUATION & SAFE SHELTER

- Upon suspension of activity, all participants, umpires, volunteers, and spectators shall seek safe shelter immediately.
- For purposes of this policy, **safe shelter** means:
 - » A substantial enclosed building with plumbing and/or electrical wiring; or
 - » A fully enclosed hard-top vehicle with all windows closed.
- The following are **not considered safe shelters**:
 - » Dugouts
 - » Tents
 - » Canopies
 - » Pavilions
 - » Open shelters
 - » Covered benches
 - » Picnic shelters
 - » Convertibles
 - » Areas under or near trees
- There is no safe place outdoors during a thunderstorm. If safe shelter is not immediately available, individuals should move as quickly as possible toward the nearest safer structure or enclosed vehicle.

4. RETURN TO PLAY AFTER LIGHTNING OR THUNDER

- No person may return to the playing area until at least thirty (30) minutes have passed since the last occurrence of any of the following:
 - » Thunder is heard;



- » Lightning is observed; or
- » A validated lightning detection tool indicates lightning within ten (10) miles of the venue.
- Any new thunder, lightning, or qualifying lightning detection during the delay shall reset the thirty (30) minute waiting period in full.
- Before play resumes, the Sports Leads, shall confirm that the field, surrounding areas, and playing conditions are safe and playable. This includes consideration of:
 - » Standing water
 - » Visibility
 - » Equipment stability
 - » Slippery surfaces
 - » Any other hazard created by the weather event
- The Designated Weather Safety Officer; The Sports Director(s), will make the call to return to play. In the event the Sports Director(s) is absent, they may designate a Sports Lead(s) or Board Member to make the call.

5. DELAY, POSTPONEMENT, RELOCATION, SHORTENING, OR CANCELLATION

- Stonewall Sports Detroit may delay, shorten, relocate, postpone, or cancel an activity whenever weather or environmental conditions make safe completion impracticable.
- In determining whether an activity may safely resume, the Sports Leads and/or Sports Director, when available, shall consider:
 - » The safety of participants, umpires, volunteers, and where applicable, spectators;
 - » The condition of the field, facility, and surrounding areas;
 - » The availability and quality of shelter and evacuation options;
 - » The likelihood of additional unsafe weather;
 - » Scheduling constraints, staffing, and venue availability; and
 - » Any liability or risk management concerns.
- **No scheduling concern shall override the requirement to suspend activity and evacuate when conditions are unsafe.**

6. HEAVY RAIN, WIND, AND OTHER SEVERE CONDITIONS

- Stonewall Sports Detroit may suspend or cancel activity for weather conditions other than lightning when those conditions create an unsafe environment, including, but not limited to:
 - » Heavy rain
 - » Standing water
 - » Severe wind
 - » Hail



- » Extreme Cold (See [Extreme Cold Weather and Snow Policy](#))
 - » Extreme Heat (See [Heat and Humidity Policy](#))
 - » Poor Air Quality (See [Air Quality Policy](#))
 - » Poor visibility
 - » Unplayable field conditions
- If severe weather warnings are issued for the area, the League may suspend or cancel activity in advance of visible or audible impacts at the venue when doing so is necessary to protect participant safety.

7. COMMUNICATION

- When activity is suspended, delayed, resumed, postponed, relocated, or canceled, the Sports Lead, Sports Director, or designee shall communicate the decision as promptly as possible to teams, umpires, volunteers, and, when feasible, spectators.
- Stonewall Sports Detroit will make reasonable efforts to provide an initial update no later than two hours before the scheduled start time when conditions allow.
- A final game-status decision will be communicated as soon as practicable, and no later than one hour before play whenever possible.
- Communication may be through email, league apps or social media.
- When possible, designated safe shelter locations should be identified to teams and umpires before play begins.

8. PARTICIPANT RIGHT TO SEEK SAFETY

- Any participant, umpire, or volunteer, who reasonably believes weather or environmental conditions are unsafe may seek safety without penalty.
- No person shall be discouraged from taking reasonable action to protect themselves from lightning and/or severe weather conditions.

Any questions? Please contact any member of the Stonewall Sports Detroit Board.