

PRESIDIO / SDDA SOCCER LEAGUE - LIGHTNING POLICY

While the probability of being struck by lightning is extremely low, the odds are significantly greater when a storm is in the area and proper safety precautions are not followed. **Prevention and education** are the keys to lightning safety. Presidio / SDDA Soccer League will monitor the weather forecasts for the day of the game and during the event. All information received about threatening weather will be distributed through the chain of command.

Be aware of any “Watches” or “Warnings” that have been issued for the area by the National Weather Service.

- A “Watch” means conditions are favorable for severe weather to develop in the area.
- A “Warning” means that severe weather has been reported in the area and everyone should take precautions.

CHAIN OF COMMAND

- Presidio / SDDA Soccer League shall be responsible for activating the Lightning Safety Policy when lightning is forecasted. The policy is **automatically activated if either a “Watch” or “Warning” is forecasted.**
- Presidio / SDDA Soccer League will communicate to the leagues that the Lightning Safety Policy is activated and leagues need to inform their teams that the Lightning Safety Policy is activated. Each team will need to select a dedicated individual to monitor the NOAA National Weather broadcast for the area.
- Presidio / SDDA Soccer League expects these two dedicated individuals (one from each team) to monitor and agree when there is a real present danger of lightning and to notify the referee that conditions are not safe, based upon the “Flash to Bang” or “If you hear thunder take cover” guidelines below. At that time the referee should suspend the game for safety.
- Teams and spectators will be instructed to move to safe locations.

DEFINING SAFE LOCATIONS

A top priority of lightning safety is removing athletes from the field of play and into a safe location.

Primary Location

- Any building that is frequently occupied by people. Plumbing and electrical wiring helps to ground the structure.

Secondary Locations

- If no primary location is available, any vehicle with a HARD METAL ROOF and rolled up windows can provide safety. **DO NOT TOUCH** the sides of the vehicle. Golf carts and convertibles provide **NO SAFETY** in a lightning storm. With a vehicle, the HARD METAL ROOF dissipates the lightning, not the rubber tires.

Unsafe Shelters

- Open fields and high places
- Isolated trees
- Gazebos
- Rain or picnic shelters
- Metal fences
- Water

“FLASH TO BANG”

Suspension and Resumption of Athletic Activities

Flash to Bang will be the primary method used to determine how far the thunderstorm is from the activity.

When suspicious cloud/storm approaches, the coach, assistant coach, and/or administrator shall monitor the approaching storm using the Flash to Bang method. Simply count the number of seconds between the lightning “flash” and the thunder “bang.” Divide the number of seconds by 5 to determine the distance the strike is from your activity.

EXAMPLE: If 15 seconds are counted between the flash and bang, divide 15 by 5. The lightning is 3 miles away.

Play must be suspended as flash to bang reaches 50 seconds or the 10 mile range.

Secondary method if flash is not observed is IF YOU HEAR THUNDER TAKE COVER! The human ear can hear sounds up to ten (10) miles away.

“30-30 RULE”

Criteria for suspension of activities:

- By the time the flash to bang count is approaching 30 seconds; all participants should already be inside a safe shelter.

Criteria for resumption of activities:

- Wait at least 30 minutes after each subsequent flash of lightning or bang of thunder before leaving the safe shelter to resume activities.

Once a game or practice has been suspended, the storm should continue to be monitored. No contest or practice should be resumed until no lightning has been detected within a 10 mile range for 30 consecutive minutes using the Flash to Bang method. Or you know longer hear thunder using the if you hear thunder take cover method.

Each time a new lightning is strike detected or a clap of thunder is heard, the 30 minute clock restarts.

Although the home team is responsible for each game or match, it should be noted that the coach, assistant coach and/or administrator is responsible for the safety and wellbeing of adults and students in his/her charge.

Storm systems can be monitored on almost every weather website by smart phones or computer.

ALWAYS THINK SAFETY FIRST WHEN LIGHTNING IS SEEN; THE GAME IS ALWAYS SECONDARY.

Links

National Weather Service – San Diego Area <http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/sqx/>

San Diego Weather Forecast Office
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San Diego, California 92127

Tel: (858) 675-8700

Android [NOAA Weather Free](#)

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