



# BYSA Policy: Lightning & Extreme Weather

Updated January 2026

## Policy Statement

Participant health and safety is a high priority for Boundary Youth Soccer Association; thus, it is recommended to err on the side of caution if ever in doubt in any situation regarding the health and safety of players.

## These Guidelines:

- Serve as a guidance for registered members, coaches, team officials, players, and referees of BYSA.
- Suggests what registered members, coaches, team officials and referees should consider in assessing lightning and severe weather at local fields and awareness of potential health impacts.
- Provide additional information about lightning and severe weather safety.

## Weather Protocols

- Decisions regarding playability will be made by registered BYSA coaches/team officials, and all participants are expected to follow these decisions. Coaches and/or team officials are expected to act responsibly when dealing with such events during games and/or practices they are controlling.
- Soccer activities will proceed in wet or rainy conditions provided the field is deemed safe and playable. Games or practices may be delayed, suspended, or cancelled if weather conditions create unsafe playing surfaces, poor visibility, or pose a risk to participant safety.
- Lightning or severe weather will result in immediate suspension of play in accordance with Canada Soccer safety guidelines.

## Flash-Bang Method

- When lightning is detected, you can determine the distance of lightning in your area by using the Flash-Bang method. The Flash-Bang method estimates how far away lightning is by timing the gap between seeing the flash and hearing the thunder.
  - Watch for the next lightning flash.
  - Count the number of seconds between the flash and the first sound of the thunder (bang).
  - Divide the number of seconds by 3.
  - Ex: 9 seconds between flash and thunder
  - $9 \div 3 = 3\text{km}$  away.



- If this time is thirty (30) seconds or less, seek proper shelter. Wait thirty (30) or more after hearing the last thunder before leaving the shelter. If you cannot see the lightning, just hearing the thunder is good back up rule.
- Remember, if you are in a higher elevation, the lightning can come upon you much quicker, and your reaction time is greatly hindered.

## **Environment Canada: Lightning Recommendations**

- The existence of blue sky and absence of rain are not protection from lightning. Lightning can and does strike as far as ten (10) miles 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. Generally, the lightning threat diminishes with time after the last sound of thunder but may persist for more than thirty (30) minutes.
- Lightning can strike ahead of 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. Recognize that personal observation of lightning may not be sufficient. Additional weather information may be required to ensure consistency, accuracy, and adequate advance warning.
- 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 shower facilities for safe shelter and do not use 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!
- If no safe structure or location is within a reasonable distance, find a thick grove of small trees surrounded by taller trees or a dry ditch. Assume a crouched position on the ground with only the balls of the feet touching the ground, wrap your arms around your knees and lower your head.
  - Minimize contact with the ground because lightning current often enters a victim through the ground rather than by a direct overhead strike.
  - Minimize your body’s surface area and the ground! Do not lie flat!
- If unable to reach safe shelter, stay away from the tallest trees or objects such as light poles or flag poles), metal objects (such as fences or bleachers), individual trees, standing pools of water, and open fields.
- Avoid being the highest object in a field. Do not take shelter under a single, tall tree.
- 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 flash of lightning or 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.

## Helpful Links

[Government of Canada Lightning Danger Map](#)

[Lightning Safety on the Soccer Field \(Video\)](#)

[Government of Canada Lightning Services & Information](#)

[Government of Canada Lightning Safety](#)