



Lightning Plan

In case of lightning everyone must evacuate the area to a safe location. The referee has the power to end the match at any time if he/she believes that play should not continue because it would be dangerous.

The referee and/or coaches can use the guidelines from USA Rugby to help make a determination.

The distance the lightning is from the match will determine when it must be called and factor in when a game can restart. To determine the distance, use the flash to bang method. This is determined by time between flash of lightning and bang of thunder (flash to bang).

- **Flash to Bang Method:** Begin counting on the lightning flash, and stop counting when the associated thunder is heard. Take that number and divide by 5. That is the number of miles away the lightning is.
 - Example- Flash to bang is 25 seconds, divide by 5 = 5 miles away.

When must a match, practice or other activity be stopped due to lightning? A match must be stopped if lightning is 6 miles or less away from the match location.

- If the time between flash to bang is 30 seconds or less, the match must be stopped and everyone moved to a safe location until the lightning has passed and is 6 miles or more away.

If Time Allows for Match to Resume After Lightning:

If a game, practice, or other activity is suspended or postponed due to lightning activity, before resuming, you must wait at least 30 minutes after the last lightning flash or sound of thunder. Each time lightning is seen or thunder is heard the 30-minute clock must be reset.

If Time Does NOT Allow for Match to Resume:

If at least 3/4th of the match has been played, match will be over and current score at that time will stand.

- 3/4th of 70 min match = at least 52 min & 30 sec played
- 3/4th of 60 min match = at least 45 min played
- 3/4th of 40 min match = at least 30 min played

If at least 3/4th of a match has NOT been played, match be rescheduled and will restart with remaining time on clock on the make-up day.

Note: Coaches may both decide to end the match and not reschedule, keeping the current score. Both coaches must agree to this and the decision MUST be decided in front of the referee, as a witness.

Example: Match ended with 15 minutes played. Match will re-start on scheduled makeup day with 15 minutes already played and same score carried over.

Make-up Matches Policy:

Games must not be cancelled or rescheduled for any reason other than severe weather. Coaches will work together to find the best make-up date to work for their teams. Then, they will work with the Executive Director to ensure trainers and referees can be assigned to the make-up match.

Regular Season:

Make-up games, when possible, will be played the Tuesday or Wednesday following the original date or a date decided by the coaches prior to playoffs. If no date is determined, the Executive Director will schedule the game. If the game does NOT take place on that date, the score will be logged as 0-0 OR if the match was stopped and had a score, the ending score will be kept.

Post Season:

Make-up games, if possible will be played the following day, or the Tuesday/Wednesday following the original date, or a date decided by the coaches. If no date is determined, the Executive Director will schedule the game. If the game does not take place on that date, the score will be logged as 0-0 OR if the match was stopped and had a score, the ending score will be kept.



USA RUGBY Severe Weather & Lightning

This document represents the USA Rugby policy with regard to lightning

Lightning Concerns

In case of lightning everyone must evacuate the area to a safe location. A large building is the best location while sheds; dugouts and bleachers are to be avoided. If a sturdy building is not available, a vehicle with closed windows will work instead. The recommend method to help determine when cover should be taken is the flash-to-bang method. To use this method, begin counting on the lightning flash, and stop counting when the associated thunder is heard. Divide this number (in seconds) by 5 to determine the distance (in miles) to the lightning flash. For example, if the time in seconds between the lightning being spotted and the thunder being hear is equal to 30, divide that by 5, and you get 6 ($30/5=6$). Therefore, that lightning flash was approximately 6 miles away from the observer. If a game, practice, or other activity is suspended or postponed due to lightning activity, it is important to establish criteria for resumption of activity. Waiting at least 30 minutes after the last lightning flash or sound of thunder is recommended. Each time lightning is seen or thunder is heard the 30-minute clock should be reset. In an attempt to educate the public about dangers relating to severe weather, the National Weather Service has established a multi-level awareness plan.

LEVEL 1- If you are planning outdoors activities, obtain the weather forecast beforehand. Know your local weather pattern.

LEVEL 2- If you are planning to be outdoors, identify and say within traveling range of a proper shelter. Employ the above-recommended method to know when to seek a safer location. If the distance is 6 miles or less, go immediately to a safer place. If you can't see the lightning, just hearing the thunder means lightning is likely within striking range.

LEVEL 3- When lightning strikes, go to a safer location. Do not hesitate.

LEVEL 4- If you cannot flee to a safer location, take action to minimize the threat of being struck. Proceed from higher to lower elevations. Avoid wide-open areas, including sports fields. Avoid tall, isolated objects like trees, poles, and light posts. Do not consider unprotected open structures such as picnic pavilions, rain shelters and bus stops. Avoid contact with metal fences, metal bleachers, or other metal structures.

LEVEL 5- If circumstances or series of bad decisions have found you outside of a shelter, far removed from a safer place when lightning is occurring, there are still measures to be taken. Put your feet together, squat down, tuck your head, and cover your ears. When the immediate threat of lightning has passed, continue heading to the safest place possible.

LEVEL 6- If the worst happens, there are key Lightning First Aid guidelines. First, if at all possible, call 9-1-1 immediately. Since all deaths from lightning strikes result from cardiac arrest and/or stopped breathing, begin treatment as soon as possible. CPR or mouth-to-mouth resuscitation is the recommended first aid, respectively.

The threat of injury due to a lightning strike is very prevalent. We unfortunately cannot control the weather, however can decrease the possibility of injury through education and proper precautions. By understanding and utilizing the five levels identified by the National Weather Service plan we can be assured that our teams are safe at all USA RUGBY events. **Please note at USA Rugby National Championships an air horn will sound three times after which all matches must stop immediately and the advice outlined above should be observed.**