

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

The WDMSC desires to protect each and every soccer player, participant, referee, coach and spectator of soccer games. However, parents have the primary responsibility to protect their children. If inclement weather threatens participants, PARENTS should take appropriate action to protect their children. Set forth below are the guidelines that will be used by WDMSC to attempt to keep people safe when dealing with inclement weather. These guidelines are not foolproof or failsafe. They are not intended to substitute for common sense or good judgment. If a parent wishes to withdraw his or her child from a practice or a game due to inclement weather – the child shall be allowed to withdraw at any time without any repercussion or penalty.

Travel:

If extreme or poor weather conditions exist, it is the responsibility of the head coach (with consultation with the team coordinator) to use his/her best judgment as to whether or not to proceed with travel to an away event. It is recommended that they contact the home club for their assessment of travel conditions in their area. Also, state police provide roadway conditions and weather advisories by phone and internet. Parents should use their own judgment to determine if travel is safe. No player will be penalized for failing to attend due to inclement weather.

Electrical Storms:

Lightning is the most consistent and significant weather hazard that may affect outdoor activities. Parents, players and coaches should be particularly aware of the safety concerns that the policy addresses and cease outdoor activity when conditions demand.

Who is Responsible: The Coach or Referee is in charge of determining when to call the game or practice. If a game is to be played with the possibility of a threat of lightning, the West Des Moines Soccer Club coach will inform the visiting team and referee of West Des Moines Soccer Club's policy with regard to lightning during pre-game warm ups if weather conditions warrant. If a practice or game should be suspended (based upon common sense and the standards set forth below) and the coach will direct the children to their parents (if available) or if unavailable, in accordance with the policy and procedures set forth below. After all children are at an acceptable shelter, the coach should attempt to contact parents of each child. Make sure the children are safe first.

Detection:

- 👤 Be aware of how close lightning is occurring by using the “flash to bang method”
 - Count the seconds from the time the lightning is sighted to when the clap of thunder is heard.

- For every 5 seconds you count, the storm is 1 mile away.
 - At 6 miles out (or 30 seconds) or less, **CEASE ACTIVITY AND SEEK SHELTER OR PROTECTION IMMEDIATELY.**
- 📍 Thunder or an approaching storm are not always the best indicators. Often the only warning you will have is your hair standing on end, and/or skin tingling, and/or a smell of ozone in the air. When this happens, lightning is imminent. **CEASE ACTIVITY AND SEEK SHELTER OR PROTECTION IMMEDIATELY.**

Shelter/Protection:

- 📍 Safe shelter is defined as a building. A safe structure at Hidden Valley would be defined as inside the West Des Moines Soccer Club garage. The exterior of the clubhouse and the pavilion area are not safe areas and these areas should be cleared.
- 📍 If access to a building is not available, seek shelter in a car with the windows up, but do not touch the sides of the vehicle. A vehicle is considered safe if it is fully enclosed with a hard metal roof, rubber tires and completely closed windows. Persons should not touch the sides of the vehicle! Convertible and “soft top” vehicles, and golf carts do not provide a high level of protection and cannot be considered safe from lightning.
- 📍 Avoid being near large trees or poles (choose a small tree in a wooded area, if possible).
- 📍 A cellular and/or 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.
- 📍 All individuals have the right to leave a site or activity, without fear of repercussion or penalty, in order to seek a safe structure or location if they feel that they are in danger from impending lightning activity.

Last Resort:

- 📍 If no safe shelter is available, crouch on the ground with your arms wrapped around your knees and only the balls of your feet touching the ground. **DO NOT LIE FLAT ON THE GROUND** – minimize ground contact.

Criteria for Safe Return to the Practice/Game Area:

- 📍 Personnel should not return to the practice/game area until thirty (30) minutes have passed since the last lightning flash or thunder.
- 📍 Each time lightning is observed and/or thunder is heard, the 30-minute clock is to be reset.
- 📍 Blue skies in the local area and/or a lack of rainfall are not adequate reasons to breach the 30-minute return to play rule.

