



Guidelines for Coaches - Thunder and Lightning at Coaching Sessions and Matches

From time to time we will experience some adverse weather conditions in the form of thunder and lightning.

To ensure we protect our players and spectators at coaching sessions and matches, the club would like everyone to adopt the following guidelines:

- If you/your team are caught in a thunderstorm you should follow the 30/30 rule used by 'The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents'. As research shows that people struck by lightning are predominantly hit before and after the peak of the storm. This means that you should be thinking about the proximity of the lightning, not the occurrence of rain.
- The 30/30 rule provides a good way of ensuring everyone is sheltering during the most risky parts of the storm, it proposes:
 - that if the flash to bang is 30 seconds in length or less you should seek shelter
 - staying inside this shelter is advised until 30 minutes past the last clap of thunder. This ensures that any distant strikes at the beginning of the storm (lightning can travel up to 10 miles), or trailing storm clouds at the back of the storm do not take anyone by surprise.
- **You can't always see the flash in daylight or when there is thick cloud. It can also be hard to associate the proper clap of thunder to the corresponding flash. Therefore, if you are not sure, err on the side of caution and seek shelter.**
- More information on this can be found at: <http://www.rospa.com/leisure-safety/advice/lightning/>

Emergency Action Plan—Lightning

Detecting Lightning

If lightning is forecasted or sighted in the area, the coach should use online weather updates, such as <https://www.netweather.tv/live-weather/lightning> to and/or the 30/30 rule to monitor lightning strikes.

Safe Shelters

If lightning is in the immediate area, the coach will notify players and spectators to take shelter. Get inside the nearest available hard-topped building such as the changing rooms or leisure centre.

If no safe shelter is within a reasonable distance, then other safe areas include: enclosed buildings, fully enclosed metal vehicles with windows up. Unsafe shelter



areas: water, open fields, dugouts, metal objects (fences, etc.), and individual tall trees. Avoid being the highest object in an open field.

All individuals have the right to leave a coaching session or match in order to seek a safe structure if the person feels in danger of impending lightning activity, without fear of repercussions or penalty from anyone.

If you feel your skin tingling, you are in more immediate danger. Assume the lightning safe position. This means crouching on the ground with your weight on the balls of your feet, your feet together, your head lowered, and your ears covered.

Even if you are indoors, stay away from open windows, sinks, toilets, tubs, showers, and electrical outlets. During a lightning storm, electric currents can run through these objects and "jump" onto a person—even inside a safe shelter.

Suspension and Resumption of Athletic Activities

As a minimum, RoSPA strongly recommends that all individuals have left the athletic sites and reach a safe shelter by the flash-to bang count of 30 seconds (6 miles). Activities must be terminated at **minimum** of 30 seconds or 6 miles. Activity may resume once the coach gives the all clear. It will be deemed safe to resume activity 30 minutes after the last lightning strike.

Managing Care of Lightning Strike Victims

Observe the following basic first aid procedures in managing victims of a lightning strike:

1. Activate local Emergency Service by dialing 999 and grab the AED (AEDs are located on the bottom shelf in the container, at the leisure centre or on the wall of the RJ Scholes Co-Op Funeral Services). Lightning victims do not "carry a charge" and are safe to touch. If necessary, move the victim with care to a safer location.
2. Evaluate airway, breathing, and circulation, and begin CPR if necessary.
3. Evaluate and treat for hypothermia, shock, fractures, and/or burns.