

## **Hazardous Weather Guidelines & Preparation**

Hazardous weather can strike quickly and without warning during any season of the year. Being prepared for such weather is crucial in preventing tragedy from striking our soccer clubs. Georgia Soccer encourages all our affiliates to review your local hazardous weather plan including, but not limited to, knowing what to do when a Tornado Warning is issued for your area, as well as how to respond to any dangerous lightning that may be approaching your fields. Your hazardous weather plan should be shared with all administrators, players, coaches, and referees, as well as posted at your fields.

Local Risk Management Coordinators may choose to use the following hazardous weather guidelines in your training and information notices to your members.

### **Tornado Guidelines and Preparation**

- ✓ Clubs should review what, if any, local tornado warning system operates within the vicinity of their fields.
- ✓ If outdoor warning sirens are heard, all activity should be suspended and the fields cleared. Everyone should immediately go to the safest location. It is important that all referees and spectators are made aware of this procedure. Affiliates should therefore consider posting any local emergency plan (with regard to tornado warnings and sirens) at their soccer facilities.
- ✓ Occasionally, tornadoes develop so rapidly that advance warning is not possible. Coaches and referees should be reminded to stay alert for signs of an approaching tornado such as a dark, often greenish sky, large hail, or a loud roar.
- ✓ In the event of a tornado, it is paramount that all local affiliates have previously determined the safest location within their facility. People can then quickly be instructed to take nearby shelter rather than trying to outrun the tornado in their vehicles.
- ✓ In a building, it is recommended that people go to the lowest level and keep away from outside walls, glass and large rooms. Affiliates should therefore determine the most suitable locations within the specific building. For example, this could be a restroom or small soccer storeroom.
- ✓ If there isn't a safe building in which to take shelter, local affiliates should locate a nearby ditch or depression for people to lie down in.
- ✓ For more information visit the Federal Emergency Management Association web site at <http://www.ready.gov/tornadoes>

## Outdoor Lightning Safety

- ✓ **No place is absolutely safe from lightning;** *however*, some places are much safer than others.
- ✓ If you hear thunder, find a safe building. A **safe building** is one that is fully enclosed with a roof, walls and floor, and has plumbing or wiring. Examples include a home, school, church, hotel, office building or shopping center. Once inside, stay away from showers, sinks, bath tubs, and electronic equipment such as TVs, radios, corded telephones and computers.
- ✓ **Unsafe buildings** include car ports, open garages, covered patios, picnic shelters, beach pavilions, golf shelters, tents of any kinds, baseball dugouts, sheds and greenhouses.
- ✓ If there isn't a safe building in which to take shelter, take shelter in a car that has a hard top.
- ✓ If you hear thunder and there are clear skies, be cautious!
  - *Bolts from the Blue* can occur. Bolt from the Blue are horizontal lightning flashes that seem like they came from the clear blue sky. They actually come from a cloud that is 5-10+ miles away. The visuals below illustrate *Bolts from the Blue*:



- ✓ Use the 30/30 rule. The 30/30 rule applies when you see lightning and the thunder follows in 30 seconds. The thunder clouds are very close and you should postpone all activities and take shelter! Take a minimum 30 minute intermission before resuming outdoor activities.
- ✓ *If there is not a safe building to take shelter,*
  - Stay away from tall, isolated trees or other tall objects. If you are in a forest, stay near a lower stand of trees. Stay out of open fields.
  - Lightning tends to strike the tallest object or person in an open field. Be the lowest object. If in an open area, crouch down if needed. This will lower the chances of being struck by lightning.

- Use the “Lightning Crouch.” USE ONLY AS A DESPERATE LAST RESORT. This requires you to put your feet together while squatting down, tucking your head, and covering your ears. After the immediate threat of lightning has passed, seek the nearest shelter immediately! (If you are with a group of people, make sure you spread out before performing the lightning crouch. This will lessen the chances of being struck by lightning.)
- ✓ Stay away from water, wet items (such as ropes) and metal objects (such as fences and poles). Water and metal are excellent conductors of electricity. The current from a lightning flash will easily travel for long distances
- ✓ Avoid leaning against vehicles. Stay off bicycles and motorcycles.

**What to do if someone is struck by lightning:**

- Call for help. Call 9-1-1 or your local ambulance service. Get medical attention as quickly as possible.
- Remember: People struck by lightning carry no electrical charge. You can help them without risk of being shocked.
- Give first aid. If the victim has stopped breathing, begin rescue breathing. If the heart has stopped beating, a trained person should give CPR. If the person has a pulse and is breathing, address any other injuries.
- The injured person has received an electric shock and may be burned. Check for burns in two places: where they were struck and where the electricity left their body. Being struck by lightning can also cause nervous system damage, broken bones, and loss of hearing or eyesight.

**Stay Informed About the Storm**

- ✓ Listen to NOAA Weather Radio or local media for the latest severe thunderstorm WATCHES and WARNINGS. Severe thunderstorms are those storms with winds in excess of 58 mph or hail larger than 3/4 inches in diameter. When conditions are favorable for severe weather to develop, a severe thunderstorm WATCH is issued.
- ✓ Weather Service personnel use information from weather radar, satellite, lightning detection, spotters, and other sources to issue severe thunderstorm WARNINGS for areas where severe weather is imminent. Remember, however, that ALL thunderstorms produce deadly lightning.
- ✓ For more information visit the National Weather Service web site at <http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov/outdoors.htm>