

CYO Lightning, Thunder and Adverse Weather Safety Policy

CYO Sports Rules are guided by NFHS when applicable with appropriate age specific adjustments in each sports. For this reason the “NFHS Guidelines on handling practices and contest during lightning or thunder disturbances” will guide the “CYO Lightning, Thunder and Adverse Weather Safety Policy” with specific CYO amendments as noted. Below you will find the NFHS Guidelines and CYO Amendments.

National Federation of State
High School Associations



NFHS GUIDELINES ON HANDLING PRACTICES AND CONTESTS DURING LIGHTNING OR THUNDER DISTURBANCES

These guidelines provide a default policy to those responsible or sharing duties for making decisions concerning the suspension and restarting of practices and contests based on the presence of lightning or thunder. The preferred sources from which to request such a policy for your facility would include your state high school activities association and the nearest office of the National Weather Service.

PROACTIVE PLANNING

1. Assign staff to monitor local weather conditions before and during practices and contests.
2. Develop an evacuation plan, including identification of appropriate nearby safe areas.
3. Develop criteria for suspension and resumption of play:
 - a. When thunder is heard or a cloud-to-ground lightning bolt is seen, the leading edge of the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Suspend play for 30 minutes and take shelter immediately.
 - b. Thirty-minute rule. Once play has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or flash of lightning is witnessed prior to resuming play.
 - c. Any subsequent thunder or lightning after the beginning of the 30-minute count will reset the clock and another 30-minute count should begin.
4. Review annually with all administrators, coaches and game personnel.
5. Inform student-athletes of the lightning policy at start of season.

For more detailed information, refer to the "Lightning Safety" section contained in the NFHS Sports Medicine Handbook.

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CYO Amendments to NFHS Guidelines:

1. NFHS lightning and thunder guidelines are to be followed for all practices and games
2. Game will be delayed **NO LONGER THAN 1 HOUR.**
3. Cancelled games will be made up, time/weather permitting, if game did not reach a point where the game can be considered a complete games as per CYO Sports Rules.
4. After the first signs of lightning and thunder, as outlined in NFHS Guidelines, 30 minutes delay will start. Each subsequent lightning or thunder activity will result in the 30 minutes delay starting over. If no other signs of lightning or thunder are present after the initial 30 minute delay the game may resume. If there is lightning or thunder after the start of the initial 30 minute delay that would cause more than a 1 hour delay the game may be cancelled.
 - a. Example
 - i. Delay @ 1:15 pm, subsequent lightning/thunder at 1:35 pm – continue to wait until 2:05 pm – if no more lightning/thunder play will resume
 - ii. Delay @ 1:15 pm, subsequent lightning/thunder at 1:35pm, subsequent lightning/thunder at 1:50pm. Delay know must go until 2:20 pm. This will result in more than a 1 hour delay. Game may be cancelled at the 1:50pm since delay will be more than 1 hour.
5. Site Coordinators are encouraged to use their best judgement to make decisions about current and future games. If there is adverse weather and or lightning and thunder presently in the area and the weather forecast and radars do not show any signs of getting better.
6. If there is no lightning or thunder but there is adverse weather site coordinator and official's best judgement will be used to determine if a game will be delayed and/or cancelled. Site coordinator will need to factor in the safety of the players as well as field conditions, radar, standing water, drainage, facility evacuation concerns.
7. Delays and cancellations will be communicated and reported to each Zone as per usual Zone determined guidelines and protocol.