

VSA Extreme Weather Policy & Procedure – Thunder/Lightning/Weather Alerts

The following policy will be followed by all members of Virginia Soccer Association. All members will be subject to the rules and guidelines provided or face disciplinary action. Those found in violation of this policy may be subject to disciplinary actions at the sole discretion of the VSA Board of Directors.

ALL THUNDERSTORMS PRODUCE LIGHTNING AND
ALL LIGHTNING CAN BE DEADLY TO THOSE OUTSIDE.

Lightning & Thunder: What You Need to Know

- **NO PLACE** outside is safe when thunderstorms are in the area!!
- **Lightning MAY strike when the storm is within 10 miles of your location.**
- If you hear thunder, lightning is close enough to strike you.
- When you hear thunder or see lightning, *immediately* move to safe shelter: a substantial building with electricity or plumbing or an enclosed, metal-topped vehicle with windows up.
- Stay in safe shelter at least 30 minutes after you hear the last sound of thunder or see the last bolt of lightning, whichever came last.

There are NO safe shelters at Long Park except for individual vehicles. ALL individuals must be in a vehicle with an enclosed metal top with windows up when a storm hits at Long Park

Severe Weather Watch vs Warning

- A severe weather **watch** is issued when weather conditions are favorable for severe weather (tornado, severe thunderstorm, hurricane, etc).
- A severe weather **warning** is issued when severe weather is imminent or occurring.

Signs of Severe Weather

- Dark Clouds
- Thunder
- Lightning
- Hail
- Rain
- Increased Wind Speed
- Sudden Temperature Drop

Rules and Procedures

Field closures will be made by PWC Parks and Rec after 3:00 pm on weekdays and 7:00 am on Saturdays. VSA will update social media and www.vsaonline.org. Green background on field status on the webpage indicates all fields are open. Yellow background indicates some fields are open and others are closed. Please click to view more details. Red background indicates all fields are closed.

When should training or games be stopped?

A significant lightning threat extends outward from the base of a storm cloud up to 10 miles. Therefore, people should move to a safe place when a storm is 6-10 miles away. The plan's guidelines should account for the time it will take everyone to get to safety.

*The following will be followed when lightning or thunder is a **threat** after 3:00 pm on weekdays and after 7:15 am on weekends.*

1. If the area is in a severe weather watch or warning, all practices for the evening will be canceled by the TD or DOC. Games will be monitored and called by the referees or coaches.
2. Coaches and parents should check the weather to know if there is a chance for inclement weather.
3. Coaches, parents, and players should keep an eye to the sky. Watch for darkening clouds and flashes of lightning. Pay close attention to the wind as an increase may mean a storm front is approaching.
4. Parents should not leave practice or training facility if inclement weather is a possibility or should make arrangements for another adult to be responsible for your child.

*The following procedures will be followed when **lightning or thunder is present**. This procedure should be put in motion upon the first sound of thunder or first flash of lightning.*

1. Clear the field or practice area as quickly as possible. Have players grab their equipment as quickly as possible (if there is an imminent threat, have the player clear the field without their equipment).
2. Have players and spectators seek safe shelter as quickly as possible. At Long Park, the only safe shelter is a parent/teammate's vehicle with the windows up.
3. If there are no buildings or vehicles nearby, proceed to the lowest point in the area. Avoid any place with metal or tall objects. Do your best not to huddle in groups.
4. Coaches will monitor for the sound of thunder and sight of lightning.

*The following procedures will be followed when **lightning and thunder have subsided**.*

1. All activities must wait a mandatory 30 minutes from the last sound of thunder and/or last sight of lightning. Every time thunder is heard or lightning is seen, you must wait 30 more minutes to resume activities.

Roles and Responsibilities

	Threat of Severe Weather	Actual Inclement Weather	After Inclement Weather
Parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check weather • Do not leave practice/game area or make arrangements for another adult present to take responsibility for your child • Keep an eye to the sky and alert coach to thunder/lightning/signs of severe weather 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide shelter in your vehicle for your child and teammate as necessary • If you are not at the practice/game location, return immediately • Do not leave shelter until instructed by the coach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check weather • Communicate with team that parents should not leave practice area due to threat • Keep an eye to the sky 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove the players from the field of play as quickly as possible • Make sure all players are in a safe shelter (vehicles only at Long Park) • Monitor the storm noting sounds of thunder or lightning strikes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure 30 minutes has passed since last sound of thunder or strike of lightning before bringing players out of the safe shelter • Call practice as necessary
Player	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alert coach to thunder/lightning/signs of severe weather 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave the playing field for safe shelter immediately upon notification of coach • Stay in safe shelter until coach calls announces 30 minutes has passed since last sound of thunder or lightning strike 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None