

Kingston Youth Soccer Association

Extreme Weather Policy

This policy is intended to provide guidance for KYSA coaches when faced with inclement weather during a soccer practice or game. During U10 and up games, the referee has the responsibility to monitor and determine if conditions have become dangerous. Of primary concern is the appearance of lightning or thunder.

Kingston referees will adhere to Coastal League Guidelines and recommendations made by both NOAA (and NLSI (National Lightning Safety Institute)). To summarize, if you can hear thunder OR see lightening, you must get to a safe place right away. Activities cannot be resumed until at least thirty minutes after the last thunder was heard. It is important to point out that the need to “go indoors” is predicated by either a sign of lightening or the sound of thunder. If you can hear thunder, an immediate lightening threat exists for your area. The new code phrase is “See it, Flee it! Hear it, Clear it!”.

During U08 and U06 games, KYSA board members will direct coaches as to when to exit the fields. If no board member is on the fields, coaches should adhere to guidelines in the above paragraph.

During practices, coaches should adhere to these guidelines as well. All coaches are tasked to develop an “Extreme Weather Plan” by the start of their first practice. No one plan will fit every team’s situation, so coaches have the responsibility for preparing and implementing these plans. Input and participation of parents of team members should be solicited and expected. The plan must be shared with all team families and age group coordinators must check with individual coaches to ensure that this requirement has been met. If coaches need assistance in developing a plan, help should be requested via the age group coordinator from the KYSA Board.

The best start is to monitor local weather reports and avoid practicing when inclement weather is due. As this is not always possible, coaches should identify safe locations for harboring in the vicinity of their practice. What is a safer location? The safest place commonly available during a lightning storm is a large, fully enclosed, substantially constructed building, e.g. your typical house, school, library, or other public building. Substantial construction also implies the building has wiring and plumbing, which can conduct lightning current safely to ground. However, any metal conductor exposed to the outside must not be touched precisely because it could become a lightning conduit.

If you can't reach a substantial building, an enclosed vehicle with a solid metal roof and metal sides is a reasonable second choice. As with a building, avoid contact with conducting paths going outside. Close the windows, lean away from the door, put your hands in your lap and don't touch the steering wheel, ignition, gear shifter or radio. Convertibles, cars with fiberglass or plastic shells, and open-framed vehicles are not suitable lightning shelters.

More information is available on the NSLI website: www.lightningsafety.com

REMEMBER THE SAFETY SLOGAN: SEE IT, FLEE IT! HEAR IT, CLEAR IT!