

# REGINA WEST ZONE COMMUNITY SOCCER ASSOCIATION

## Lightning & Severe Weather Policy

(April 2024)

### **Weather Cancellations**

- Soccer can be played in the rain BUT we must be concerned about damage to the field and safety of the players (slippery, mud, potholes)
- City permits may be pulled – check [www.regina.ca](http://www.regina.ca) under Athletic Fields. The City will post field status by 3:00pm every afternoon.
- RWZCSA may cancel play – check our Facebook page
- The Referee Coordinator may send you an email – check your email each day
- You may get a phone call or text from the Referee Coordinator about a last minute field or weather cancellation

### **Rain**

We can and do play soccer in the rain. At all times referees and coaches must put the safety of the players first. In the case of rain, if the grass becomes slippery where player safety is endangered or the field is at risk of extensive damage, or any other situation exists which jeopardizes the safety of any participants, the game **MUST** be suspended. (The field is not suitable for play, if you step on the turf and moisture can be detected around your shoe).

### **Heat Warnings**

Referees and coaches must also consider player safety when encountering heat warnings as issued by public health agencies or Environment Canada. These situations are judgement calls on the part of the referee and coaches with the referee having the final decision.

In extreme heat situations, parents are requested to judge their young player's tolerance to the heat. In cases of extreme heat, games will normally proceed as scheduled. When temperature, including Humidex, exceeds 35 degrees Celsius at game start, there will automatically be at least one hydration break (water breaks or cooling breaks as described in Law 7 of our Rules) inserted per half (at the 15 and 45 minute mark). For younger players or with active older age players the referee should consider water/cooling breaks for games even when the temperature is below 35 degrees Celsius (including Humidex). The decision on whether to suspend or cancel the match is at the discretion of competition organizers, referees and coaches.

There is no specific guidance by FIFA on extreme cold. The World Players Union (FIFPRO) recommends that training and matches be cancelled and rescheduled when the air temperature **is less than -15 degrees Centigrade** and when the **Wind Chill Temperature is less than -27 degrees Centigrade**.



## **Air Quality Warnings**

For regular season Outdoor games, if the air quality health index at 4:30 PM is 7 or higher (High Risk), all soccer activities will be cancelled for the evening. For tournament games this policy will be applied 1.5 hours prior to the scheduled game time.

When the risk levels reach 7 we may well have to advise parents to consider reducing or rescheduling strenuous activities outdoors if they or their children experience symptoms such as coughing and throat irritation.

The Air Quality Health Index for Regina can be found at:

[https://weather.gc.ca/airquality/pages/skaq-001\\_e.html](https://weather.gc.ca/airquality/pages/skaq-001_e.html)

The policy described in Law 5 of our Rules asks referees to work closely with coaches if game-time decisions are required. To be proactive we as a league may have to take action as required in advance of the games. Daily we will have to monitor the air quality index and follow Environment Canada guidelines.

## **Wind**

Strong winds are not ideal for soccer games. Winds can cause balls to move unpredictably in the air making them harder to judge. Free kicks become difficult to manage, and lead to unlikely goals. Strong winds can force teams to change their tactics by focusing on short passes, and field positioning. Severe wind storms are dangerous and difficult to predict with some gusts coming with little or no warning.

Failure to monitor the weather and prepare for high winds can result in both severe injury and property damage. Severe winds can cause tree branches and limbs to fall, knock over structures like soccer goals and playground equipment, and affect a wide variety of temporary outdoor structures.

A high wind warning is issued by Environment Canada when sustained winds of 64 km/hr or greater or gusts to 90 km/hr or greater are expected. In the event of high winds everyone involved in soccer should:

1. Monitor the local weather forecast
2. Bring loose items indoors to prevent objects being blown away or becoming projectiles
3. Secure larger objects
4. Consider postponing or suspending play as the game is not much fun in a high wind.
5. If concerned over physical safety take cover next to a building or under a shelter.

## Lightning

Lightning is a severe hazard that must be viewed seriously. Everyone should immediately seek shelter any time they believe lightning threatens. Postpone or suspend activity if a thunderstorm appears imminent before or during a game or practice (irrespective of whether lightning is seen or thunder is heard) until the hazard has passed. Signs of imminent thunderstorm activity are darkening clouds, high winds, and thunder or lightning activity in the area.

### **When thunder roars, go indoors!**

The safety of players, coaches, management and spectators is the primary concern in any weather event that occurs during all matches sanctioned by Canada Soccer. By understanding and following the below information, the safety of everyone shall be greatly increased. Ultimately, the referee has the final say over delaying or restarting a match due to weather. Waiting to stop play or not waiting to start play may result in a serious injury or loss of life. Referees are expected to act responsibly when dealing with such events during matches they are controlling

If you can hear thunder, you can get hit by lightning. As soon as you hear thunder, quickly get to a safe location. More people are struck before and after a thunderstorm than during one. Stay inside for 30 minutes after the last rumble of thunder.

1. Athletes, team officials and spectators must immediately seek an appropriate safe shelter.
2. Avoid being the highest point in an open field, in contact with, or proximity to the highest point, as well as being on the open water. Do not take shelter under or near trees, flagpoles, metal fences or light poles.
3. Should you be caught in a lightning storm, assume the lightning safe position (crouch on the ground, weight on the balls of the feet, feet together, head lowered, and ears covered) for individuals who feel their hair stand on end, skin tingle, or hear “crackling” noises. Do not lie flat on the ground.

**All individuals have the right to leave an athletic site 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.**