



## **STRYKER & WRSA Weather Policy**

Weather condition awareness is the responsibility of the game officials, coaches, tournament directors, club administrators and SSC/WRSA administration. All should be aware of the potential dangers posed by different weather conditions and work together to keep the players and other participants as safe as possible. If the weather conditions warrant, Stryker Admin, Field Marshalls, game officials and coaches should discuss before the game starts what the procedures will be to insure the safety of the players.

League and/or tournament directors should monitor weather conditions including the warnings and watches issued by the National Weather Service. In the event of sudden changes, the league and/or tournament directors have means of sending warnings to the site officials/marshals via two-way radios, air horns and cell phones.

A weather plan will be provided to the participating teams and spectators to allow a clear understanding of shelter locations, evacuation plans and how the weather will affect league and/or tournament results.

Technology has improved the monitoring capability for all concerned. There are many new apps for phones and tablets that provide accurate and timely weather reports, forecasts and warnings. Lightning detectors can take the guesswork out of how far away lightning is.

### **Preliminary Concerns**

It is strongly recommended that clubs make sure their coaches all have the latest weather apps loaded on their phones and are signed up to receive the RainedOut communications from the Stryker Complex and/or the Wichita Regional Soccer Association. Weather apps should include instant weather conditions and lightning strike notification.

Conditions in one location may be very different from another, especially the further apart the two locations are. The coaches are responsible for keeping informed of the weather conditions at home, along their route to the game and at the game site.

### **Severe Storms**

Severe storms can produce high winds, heavy rain, hail, lightning, thunder and/or tornados. If a severe storm approaches the playing area, the safety of the players is the number one priority of Stryker Complex Admin, Field Marshalls, Referees, and coaches. In the event the game is suspended, ALL participants MUST clear the field immediately and move into their cars or other permanent shelter like the Stryker Indoor Soccer Field Building.

High winds can create problems by dust and debris being in the air or blowing over objects. Heavy rain can create hazardous field conditions or lead to flash flooding. Hail can cause injury. Lightning and thunder are discussed separately below. Tornados are obvious dangers of any severe storm. Use common sense and seek shelter as directed or appropriate.

### **Thunder and Lightning**

Lightning is the second leading cause of storm-related deaths (flooding is first). Lightning can strike up to 10 miles outside of a thunderstorm, literally a bolt from the blue. The danger from lightning can persist for 20-30 minutes or more after a thunderstorm has passed. The National Weather Service does not issue watches or warnings for lightning by itself. However, the National Weather Service does advise that if you see a lightning bolt and hear the thunder in 30 seconds or less, you seek shelter and

wait 30 minutes before resuming outdoor activity. If a person can hear thunder, or see lightning, the danger already is present. A clear, sunny sky overhead with storm clouds nearby can still be dangerous.

Stryker Complex Admin, Field Marshalls, Referees and Coaches should adhere to the following:

- If lightning is within (10) ten miles, with or without hearing thunder, the game(s) or practice(s) should be suspended, and shelter sought for a minimum of (30) thirty minutes. A lightning detector or similar app can identify the distance accurately but may not be available.
- If another lightning strike occurs or thunder is heard during the original (30) thirty-minute suspension of play, the (30) thirty-minute suspension clock shall start over from the moment of the secondary lightning flash or sound of thunder.
- The Stryker Complex and WRSA recommends that participants seek immediate shelter in their automobiles or a designated severe weather shelter, the Stryker Indoor Soccer Field Building. Smaller, open structures, tents, trees, isolated areas, etc., should be avoided. Cars, with windows rolled up or buses, can provide good shelter. Avoid contact with metal or other conducting materials to the outside surfaces. Do not stay in open, unprotected areas.
- **Games should not be restarted for at least 30 minutes** after the last lightning strike is seen or roll of thunder is heard.
- Stryker/WRSA Admin and/or Tournament Directors should inform participating teams of notification and evacuation plans and shelters near the playing sites.

### Hot Weather

Heat is a problem when it prevents the body from cooling itself. The hotter the body gets, the more likely it is to increase fatigue levels, develop cramps and increase the possibility of heat exhaustion and heat stroke. The hotter and more humid the weather, the faster these problems can develop.

Temperatures as low as 65 degrees, with a relative humidity of 100%, can be serious.

1. Every coach and referee can find a heat index chart at ([www.nws.noaa.gov](http://www.nws.noaa.gov))
2. Games need to be adjusted as the heat index rises:
  - a. Mandatory water breaks
  - b. Go to quarters
  - c. Shorten the games
3. Coaches need to be educated in recognizing the signs of heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

Stryker admin, Tournament Directors, Field Marshalls, Referees and coaches are responsible for monitoring the heat index (by apps, weather radio, online or the Weather Channel) and keeping the participating teams and game officials informed of the heat index. **DO NOT FORGET THAT THE HEAT IS AMPLIFIED BY THE TURF.**

The following are recommended when there is a possibility of dangerous high heat index:

Heat Index	Recommendations
Up to 84°	Normal Play
85° - 89°	Mandatory two-minute water breaks per half with running time.
90° - 99°	Mandatory two-minute water breaks per half with running time. Each half shortened by five minutes.
100° - 104°	Mandatory two-minute water breaks per half with running time. Each half shortened by ten minutes.
105°+	Suspend Play

For further information, please check the NOAA website for additional information on how temperature and humidity combine to make it feel hotter.

## Cold Weather

For fall & winter play cold becomes a factor. Players should be allowed to dress in appropriate clothing. Field conditions will be affected by freezing rain, sleet and snow.

Temperature means either ambient (still air) or wind chill index. Coaches, players and spectators should check their phones often for weather related updates from the Stryker Complex and WRSA via the RainedOut app.

Cold Index	Recommendations
46° and higher	No Change
45° and lower	Allowable Additional Clothing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Layered beneath uniform (for example)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ long sleeves</li><li>○ long pants</li><li>○ additional socks</li></ul></li><li>• Gloves or mittens</li><li>• Stocking caps without straps</li><li>• Sweat pants or shirts - In the case of extremely cold weather, may be worn underneath the uniform, provided the entire team uses the same color sweats</li><li>• Jackets may be worn under the uniform so that referees can see the player's number in the event of a card being issued.</li></ul> Clothing NOT Allowed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hooded sweatshirts<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ hoods and strings present possibility of being grabbed</li></ul></li><li>• Ear muffs (headbands OK)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ plastic or metal part crossing top of head presents potential hazard</li></ul></li><li>• Scarves<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Isadora Duncan Syndrome</li></ul></li></ul>
40° and lower	Shorten games by 5 min/half
35° and lower	Suspend games

- Players on sidelines should remain dressed (if in warm-ups) until they enter the game.
- Players coming off should put more layers on and/or get under blankets
- Sitting on benches or chairs is recommended as laying on the ground steals body heat quicker.
- Keep hydrated-avoid caffeine and carbonated drinks.
- Safety and health of the players come first.