



Electrical Storm Safety Guidelines

Electrical storm is a risk that can cause death to participants in rugby league. It is vitally important that appropriate procedures are put in place to minimise exposure to injury due to lightning strike.

The following guideline includes a designated “Weather Watcher” who has the authority to stop, postpone and restart training or matches. The “Weather Watcher” is recommended to be a senior official within the Rugby League organisation and is responsible for recognising the danger and activating the lightning protection plan. A designated safe haven in the event of electrical storm should be identified and promoted / advised to all within the organisation.

CRITERIA FOR THE SUSPENSION AND RESUMPTION OF ACTIVITIES

The 30/30 rule is recommended, where a Flash to Bang count is recorded. This procedure is based on the fact that lightning travels faster than sound, and given that sound travels at a speed of about one kilometre every three seconds, the time that elapses between the flash of lightning and clap of thunder can be divided by three to give a measure of how far away the storm is in kilometres.

A safe distance is generally considered to be approximately 10 kilometres. This means that as the “Flash to Bang” count approaches 30 seconds, all people at risk should be seeking or already in a safe haven. Once the threat has passed the 30/30 rule provides the criteria for the resumption of

play. Wait until the electrical storm has passed, with the “Flash to Bang” count again exceeding 30 seconds - suggesting the storm is again at least 10 kilometres away. Allow a 15 minute safety margin before re-commencing activities. It is important to emphasise that “blue skies and lack of rain fall” are not adequate reasons to resume play early.

DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION/CROWD STRATEGIES

It is important that all players, officials and spectators are warned of the potential dangers of lightning-related injuries. Two short blasts of the full time siren/bell is an appropriate means of activating the electrical storm postponement procedure. Reading lightning safety messages over the public address system and placing notices on the Notice Board are also recommended.