DELTONA YOUTH SOCCER

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WEATHER & LIGHTNING SAFETY POLICY

Effective: Immediately

1. Purpose

The safety and well-being of DYSC players, coaches, referees, volunteers, staff, and spectators shall take precedence over all practices, games, camps, tournaments, training sessions, and other club activities.

No soccer activity is more important than a child's safety.

This policy establishes a consistent procedure for monitoring severe weather, suspending activities, evacuating fields, communicating with families, and authorizing the safe resumption of activities.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All DYSC practices
- Academy sessions
- Competitive training
- Developmental programs
- TOPSoccer
- Talent ID
- Camps and clinics
- Tryouts
- Futures
- Tournaments hosted or operated by DYSC
- Games and scrimmages
- Any other outdoor DYSC activity

It applies to players, coaches, trainers, referees, administrators, volunteers, and spectators.

3. Weather and Safety Principle

DYSC adopts the following principle:

When there is reasonable doubt regarding weather safety, the activity will be suspended.

A cancellation or delay is inconvenient.

A preventable lightning injury is potentially catastrophic.

No penalty, criticism, or retaliation will be given to a coach, manager, or staff member for stopping an activity because of a legitimate weather-safety concern.

4. Lightning Policy

A. Lightning or thunder = immediate suspension

DYSC activities shall immediately cease when:

- Lightning is observed.
- Thunder is heard.
- An approved weather-monitoring system identifies lightning within DYSC's designated safety radius; or
- The designated Weather Safety Officers determine that conditions present a reasonable lightning threat.

Coaches do not have discretion to continue practice once the suspension threshold has been reached.

B. 30/30 Rule

DYSC will follow the Florida-recommended 30/30 framework:

30 seconds: If the time between a lightning flash and the associated thunder is 30 seconds or less, everyone must seek shelter.

30 minutes: Activities may not resume until at least 30 minutes have passed following the last thunder/lightning event. Florida specifically advises remaining in safe shelter for 30 minutes after the final clap of thunder. (Florida Disaster)

Additionally, every new lightning strike or thunder event resets the 30-minute. No coach may independently determine that the storm has "passed."

5. Who Makes the Call?

Weather Safety Officers / Site Safety Leads

This person has unquestionable authority to suspend outdoor activities because of weather.

Weather monitoring → Site Safety Lead → Coaches/Managers → Players & Families

6. Weather Monitoring

The designated Site Safety Lead shall monitor weather using reliable weather information and lightning detection resources before and during activities.

Monitoring should begin:

At least 30 minutes before scheduled outdoor activity and continue throughout the activity.

The Site Safety Lead shall monitor:

- Lightning
- Thunderstorms
- Severe weather alerts
- Heavy rain
- High winds
- Tornado warnings
- Excessive heat
- Unsafe field conditions

7. Shelter Procedure

When activities are suspended:

Players

Players must immediately leave the field and proceed to an approved safe shelter.

Coaches

Coaches are responsible for keeping their teams together and accounting for players.

Parents

Parents should be instructed to move to an appropriate safe location.

Spectators

Spectators should be directed away from the fields and toward appropriate shelter.

Important:

Dugouts, tents, bleachers, trees, and open-sided structures should not be treated as lightning shelters.

8. Return to Play

The Site Safety Lead—not individual coaches—authorizes the return to play.

Before resumption:

1. The 30-minute waiting period must be completed.
2. No new lightning/thunder activity can have occurred during the waiting period.
3. Weather conditions must be reassessed.
4. Fields must be checked for unsafe conditions.
5. The Site Safety Lead authorizes the restart.
6. Coaches are notified.
7. Activities may resume.

If lightning or thunder occurs during the waiting period:

The 30-minute clock starts again.

9. Severe Weather Other Than Lightning

DYSC will also suspend activities when conditions include:

Tornado Warning

Immediate suspension and sheltering.

Severe Thunderstorm Warning

The Site Safety Lead will assess the warning and may suspend activities immediately.

High Winds

Activities may be suspended if wind creates danger from goals, equipment, trees, structures, or flying debris.

Heavy Rain/Flooding

Activities may be suspended when field conditions create a player-safety hazard.

Extreme Heat

DYSC will follow applicable heat-safety guidance and may modify, delay, or cancel activities.

10. Coach Responsibilities

Every coach shall:

- Know this policy.

- Know the designated shelter location.
- Know who the Site Safety Lead is.
- Immediately comply with a weather suspension.
- Keep players together during a weather delay.
- Account for all players.
- Never encourage players to remain on the field during a lightning threat.
- Never restart activity without authorization.
- Report any weather-related incident to club leadership.

Coaches are NOT responsible for determining whether lightning is "close enough."

Their responsibility is simple:

When the safety protocol is triggered, stop and shelter.

11. Team Manager Responsibility

Team managers should assist with:

- Parent communication
- Emergency contact information
- Player accountability
- Communication of cancellation/resumption messages
- Helping families understand shelter procedures

Managers should never override a safety decision made by the Site Safety Lead.

12. Communication Protocol

DYSC’s official communication channel for weather decisions.

Weather Decision → Club Administrator (coaches) → Team Managers → Parents

Messages should clearly state:

Suspension

DYSC WEATHER ALERT: All outdoor activities are suspended immediately due to weather conditions. Please leave the fields and proceed to a safe shelter. Further updates will follow.

Cancellation

DYSC WEATHER ALERT: All outdoor activities scheduled for today are cancelled due to weather conditions. Please do not return to the fields until further notice.

Resumption

DYSC WEATHER UPDATE: Weather conditions have been reassessed, and the required safety period has been completed. Activities may resume at _____.

13. Documentation

The Site Safety Lead should maintain a simple weather log:

Time	Weather condition	Action	Person responsible
5:15 PM	Lightning detected	Monitoring	Site Safety Lead
5:32 PM	Lightning/thunder	Practice suspended	Site Safety Lead
5:32 PM	Players sheltered	Teams accounted for	Coaches
6:02 PM	No additional activity	Monitoring	Site Safety Lead
6:15 PM	30-minute period completed	Restart authorized	Site Safety Lead

That's important for safety, governance, and risk management.

14. Training and Awareness Requirement

Every DYSC:

- Coach
- Assistant coach
- Team manager
- Site administrator
- Camp staff member
- Program director
- Staff

must receive weather-safety training.

15. No Retaliation

DYSC will maintain an environment where parents, players, coaches, and volunteers can raise legitimate safety concerns without fear of retaliation.

A parent who reports a genuine safety concern should be treated as helping protect the club, not as creating a problem.

16. Incident Review

Any significant weather-related incident would be reviewed by club leadership.

Examples include:

- Lightning occurring while players are on the field
- Failure to evacuate promptly
- Unauthorized continuation of practice
- Unauthorized resumption
- Injury associated with severe weather
- Failure of communication
- Failure to follow this policy

The purpose of the review is **corrective** action and learning, not automatic punishment.

17. Board Oversight

DYSC Board will formally review this policy annually before the summer season and whenever there is a significant weather-related incident.

The Board should also review:

- Weather-monitoring tools
- Shelter adequacy
- Emergency Action Plan
- Coach training
- Communication procedures
- Insurance/risk-management requirements
- Applicable FYSA requirements

18. The DYSC standard

WHEN IN DOUBT, WE STOP.

When lightning threatens, soccer stops.

When safety is uncertain, we choose safety.

No practice, game, tournament, camp, or competition is more important than the safety of our players.

19. Make-up Sessions

Weather-related cancellations are sometimes unavoidable and are made solely in the interest of player safety. While DYSC will make reasonable efforts to provide make-up opportunities for cancelled sessions, a make-up session is not guaranteed for every cancelled practice or program session.

The ability to provide make-up sessions is dependent upon facility availability, contracted field-use limitations, facility occupancy requirements, existing programming, and the club's overall scheduling capacity. DYSC's facility-use agreement may limit the number of hours or sessions

the club can utilize, making it impractical to replace every cancelled session.

Where feasible, DYSC may schedule make-up sessions at alternative times, including weekends or other available dates, and may combine or consolidate make-up opportunities where appropriate.

Make-up sessions will be scheduled at the discretion of DYSC based on available facility capacity, program needs, coach availability, and operational considerations. The club's priority will always be to provide reasonable opportunities for additional training while maintaining safe, responsible, and sustainable use of its facilities.

Safety decisions will never be influenced by whether a cancelled session can be made up.