



Florida Elite Inclement Weather Guidelines

FEFC policy states protecting participants, volunteers, officials, and spectators is most important.

These guidelines are in place to ensure the safety of everyone involved in youth football activities. Compliance with these guidelines is mandatory and critical for the well-being of players, coaches, officials, and spectators. No severe weather safety guidelines will give 100% guaranteed safety, but these steps will help volunteers avoid many casualties:

Communication

- **Pre-Event Notification:** Inform all participants and spectators of the inclement weather guidelines before the season begins.
- **On-Site Communication:** Use a PA system, bullhorn, blowing whistle continuously or other effective communication methods to alert all attendees of the need to evacuate and where to seek shelter.
- **Post-Event Communication:** Notify all participants and spectators when it is safe to resume activities.
 - **Use apps to communicate efficiently, effectively, and quickly**

Weather Contingencies

Lightning

If thunder is heard, there is a danger of lightning. Lightning can travel sideways for up to 10 miles and strike from blue skies. Football fields are especially dangerous areas during a lightning storm.

- ❖ Each organization should have a lightning detection device.
- ❖ If lightning is within 0-6 miles of the practice and game field, all participants should be removed from the field and bleachers.
- ❖ Wait 30 minutes after the last strike outside of the 0–6-mile range before resuming practice or gameplay.
- ❖ **Seek safe shelter.**
 - The safest place to be during a thunderstorm is in a car or a fully enclosed building.
- ❖ Avoid the most dangerous locations such as open fields, higher elevations, and metal objects such as goal posts, metal fences, and metal bleachers.
- ❖ Coaches or referees will clear the fields on practice or game day by constantly blowing their whistles.

Hail

- ❖ If hail is observed or forecasted, all activities must be suspended immediately.
- ❖ Players, coaches, and spectators must evacuate the field and seek safe shelter
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 - Appropriate shelters include enclosed buildings and vehicles.
- ❖ Avoid open fields and areas without overhead protection.
- ❖ Activities can resume once the hailstorm has passed and it is safe by the head coach, board member, or league officials.

Tornado and Hurricane

- ❖ If a tornado warning is issued or a tornado is spotted, all activities must be suspended immediately.
- ❖ **Clearing the Field:**
 - Players, coaches, and spectators must evacuate the field and seek safe shelter.
- ❖ **Seeking Shelter:**
 - Appropriate shelters include sturdy buildings with a basement or small interior rooms on the lowest floor, away from windows and doors.
- ❖ Avoid open fields, vehicles, mobile homes, and large-span structures such as gymnasiums or auditoriums.
- ❖ Activities can resume once the tornado warning has expired and it is deemed safe by local authorities.

Hurricanes

All organization board members and volunteer coaches must be extra vigilant when a hurricane watch is in effect. A hurricane watch means that weather conditions are favorable for the development of the hurricane and or we are in the path of it. A hurricane warning is a much more serious condition. A tornado/hurricane warning means a tornado/hurricane has been sighted. If a tornado/ hurricane warning is issued, all practice or games will stop immediately, and all participants and spectators will seek shelter. Seek shelter in a solid structure, preferably in an interior room. If no building is available, lie down in a ditch or get to a car.

Important

For organizational board members and volunteer coaches, calm control must be maintained during inclement weather. Coaches must communicate calmly with the participants and parents and ensure no one is left unaccounted for when seeking shelter.

Should there be no secure shelters at the fields used by the organization when an inclement weather event occurs during a practice or game, coaches are to gather the participants at the nearest structure for collection by their parents. No participant shall be left unsupervised during an inclement weather event.