



## **Lightning Policy**

### **Overview**

Volleyball Australia Lightning Policy has been introduced to reduce the risk of weather related injury to players, coaches, & officials involved in Volleyball Australia (VA) events or activities. The policy also contains a number of guidelines to assist players, coaches, & officials in recognising and supplying established procedures for removing themselves from harm.

Each event or competition will be declared safe to play or not by a VA Representative on a case by case basis using the below guidelines.

### **Summary**

- Lightning kills 5-10 people per year in Australia.
- Lightning deaths are preventable by taking precautions.
- If your clothes are wet, you are less likely to be seriously injured if struck, as most of the charge will conduct through the wet clothes rather than your body.
- If storms are possible, prepare fellow players for the likelihood that games will be interrupted and inform others of the protocol which will be followed.
- Use the 30/30 rule to assess danger:
  - o Clear the playing field immediately if the flash-to-bang gap is less than 30 seconds;
  - o Seek shelter in a large permanent structure or enclosed metal vehicle;
  - o If there is no shelter, crouch down with feet together preferably 20m away from solitary tall objects; and
  - o Only return to the playing field once 30 minutes has elapsed since the last lightning strike.

### **Identify the risk**

If lightning is observed or thunder is heard, count the time between the lightning (flash) and the thunder (bang). If the time delay is less than thirty (30) seconds then the strike was closer than 10km and the playing area should be cleared immediately.

### **Seek shelter**

If in doubt, seek shelter as soon as lightning is observed or thunder is heard. All players are responsible for identifying the risk and must trust the judgement of anyone who identifies the risk.

- Seek shelter in a large building or fully-enclosed metal vehicle - avoid small structures, fabric tents and isolated or small groups of trees. If in the open away from shelter, crouch down (singly), preferably in a hollow, with feet together and remove metal objects from head and body. Do not lie down but avoid being the highest object in the vicinity.
- If your hair stands on end or you hear buzzing from nearby rocks, fences, etc, move immediately. At night, a blue glow may show if an object is about to be struck (St Elmo's fire).
- Don't handle long or metallic objects such as umbrellas or shade structures in the open.
- Don't touch or move close to metal structures, wire fences, goal posts or light towers.
- Don't ride bicycles or drive in open vehicles.
- If inside a fully-enclosed metal-bodied vehicle park away from trees, power lines etc.
- Stay inside vehicles or caravans but do not touch or lean on metal body components.
- When inside a building AVOID use of the telephone, taking a shower, washing your hands, doing dishes, or any contact with conductive surfaces with exposure to the outside such as metal door or window frames, electrical wiring, telephone wiring, cable TV wiring, plumbing, etc.

### **First Aid**

If someone is struck apply first aid techniques immediately. There is no threat of electrocution through bodily contact with someone who has been struck by lightning. Lightning fatalities usually are caused by cardiac arrest; the lightning causes the heart to stop. Where necessary, apply immediate heart massage and

mouth-to-mouth resuscitation (CPR) to lightning victims until medical help arrives and they will have a good chance of survival.

On average, 20% of people struck by lightning are killed.

### **Suspension of play**

Immediately someone has observed a delay of less than 30 seconds, play should be suspended. If one game at a venue suspends play due to a lightning observation, all games at that venue are deemed to have been suspended at that exact moment also.

### **Resumption of play**

Only return to the playing field after at least 30 minutes after the last lightning or thunder has been observed. Be conservative.

If a particular competition or event has a policy/ rule for game cancellation, then that will be implemented if the games are not continued.