

# Electrical Storm Safety Guidelines.

<b>TYPE OF POLICY</b>	Participation 'Guidelines'
<b>EFFECTIVE DATE</b>	
<b>POLICY OWNER</b>	Australian Rugby League Commission
<b>POLICY CONTACT</b>	NRL General Manager – Game Development and Education

## A. REASON FOR GUIDELINES

Lightning presents a real risk of serious injury or even death to outdoor sports participants. It is vitally important that appropriate procedures are put in place to minimise exposure to injury due to lightning strike.

## B. GUIDELINES STATEMENT

These guidelines have been created for the protection of the public from lightning in electrical storms during training and games of rugby league.

## C. SCOPE

These guidelines apply to players, match officials, safety personnel, venue operators, Clubs, Districts, Divisions, Groups and Leagues.

## D. POLICY HISTORY

<b>PARTICIPATION POLICY IDENTIFICATION NUMBER</b>	<b>VERSION</b>	<b>RELEASE DATE</b>	<b>AUTHOR</b>
PO			

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## 1.0. CRITERIA FOR THE SUSPENSION AND RESUMPTION OF ACTIVITIES

The threat to personal safety is greatest if a person is outdoors when a thunderstorm is local. An approaching thunderstorm is treated as local when the time interval between seeing a lightning flash and hearing the thunder is less than 30 seconds (Flash to Bang). A receding local thunderstorm is no longer a threat when more than 30 minutes have elapsed after the last thunder is heard.

If the time between seeing a lightning flash and hearing a thunderclap is less than 30 seconds, the thunderstorm is within 10km (as sound travels at approximately 340m per second). Stop all outdoor activity immediately and seek appropriate shelter indoors (such as in a solid building or totally enclosed car). Do not seek shelter under a tree (or group of trees) in the open or in small open structures such as picnic shelters.

Once inside people should avoid using the telephone and contacting metallic structures. These warnings apply particularly if thunder follows within 15 seconds of a lightning flash (corresponding to a distance of less than 5 km).

The 30/30 rule is recommended, where a 'flash to bang' count is recorded.

This procedure is based on the fact that light 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 the clap of thunder can be divided by three to give an approximate 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

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be in, a safe haven. Once the threat has passed, the 30/30 rule provides the criteria for the resumption of play.

Wait at least 30 minutes after the last sound (thunder) or observation of lightning and ensure conditions are completely safe before leaving shelter to resume activities. Each time lightning is observed or thunder is heard, the 30 minute clock should be re-started

## 2.0. DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION/CROWD STRATEGIES

It is important that all players, officials and spectators are warned of the potential dangers of lighting-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.

### 3.0. LIGHTNING FACTS

- A. All thunderstorms produce lightning and are dangerous.
- B. Lightning often strikes outside the area of heavy rain and may strike as far as fifteen kilometres from any rainfall.
- C. Any time thunder is heard, the thunderstorm is close enough to pose an immediate lightning threat to your location.
- D. When thunderstorms are in the area but not overhead, the lightning threat can still exist even when overhead it is sunny, not raining, or when clear sky is visible.
- E. Many lightning casualties occur before the thunderstorm rains have moved into the area. this is often due to people not seeking shelter soon enough.
- F. Large numbers of casualties occur after the rain dissipates. This can be due to people being in too much of a hurry to go back outside and resume activities.

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#### REFERENCES-

AUSTRALIAN LIGHTNING STANDARD (AS1768-2007)