

AYLA Lightning Policy

When in doubt, clear the field and find shelter!

The Problem: The instructions to Coaches and Officials about when to stop or postpone practice or a game due to lightning are generally vague. If a coach knew how to determine distance to a strike by counting the flash to bang time, he or she was left wondering, in face of obvious pressure, when to stop practice or the game. The question remained if there's a strike miles ___ away, what does that mean?

“30-30“ or 30 Seconds — STOP rule: Stop practice/ game when there is a 30 second or less “flash to bang“(thunder) time. At 30 seconds “flash to bang”, the lightning strike is 6 miles away. Practice/ game should be stopped earlier if there are extraordinary circumstances regarding getting everyone to safe shelter. Safe shelter is defined as a solid building with plumbing and electricity or, secondarily, motor vehicles with metal roofs and the windows rolled up.

In Kapiolani Park:

Paki Ave side- the west side of the rest rooms offers a large covered area that can provide shelter from the elements.

Kalakaua Ave side: the rest rooms on the west side of the tennis courts offer shelter just outside the entrance to the restrooms.

30 minutes — RESUME: Resume practice/ game no sooner than 30 minutes after the last visible lightning flash or thunder.

Determining the Distance to a Lightning Strike: The distance to a lightning strike can be determined by using “flash to bang” (thunder) counting method. Sound travels one mile every 5 seconds. When lightning is sighted, count the seconds until you hear thunder. If five seconds elapse, the lightning strike was one mile away. Ten seconds indicate the lightning is two miles away...thirty seconds indicate the lightning is six miles away.

Monitoring the Weather: Prior to the individual practice/game, the outdoor weather should be noted. If a thunderstorm is imminent, the practice/game should be suspended or postponed. Imminent refers to dark clouds with winds picking up in intensity, sounds of thunder, or lightning in the distance. Such conditions indicate that the weather is not conducive to safe playing and spectating conditions. If practice or play has already begun, any sign of an imminent storm should be watched for and cessation of play considered. It must also be remembered that sounds of thunder can be diminished in urban areas, by surrounding mountains, trees, or buildings. **Therefore, when in doubt- activities should be suspended and participants and spectators should head for designated safer locations.**

Field Closure due to rain: Honolulu Rec and Parks may shut down the fields during long periods of rain. Fields will be marked with “Fields Closed” signs. If discovering these signs, please Contact the Board of Directors so that word can be passed to all of the coaches, players and parents.

Updated: February 18, 2015

Sources: US Lacrosse, Honolulu Rec and Parks