



# St Ives AFL

## Lightning Guidelines

Major Sponsor



### 1 Lightning Guidelines

These guidelines have been developed based on the AFL provided recommendations. Personal safety is the highest priority; please err on the side of caution when making decisions on playing or training to minimise the risk.

When lightning is considered to be a possible or actual threat to an AFL match the following procedures are applicable:

#### 1.1 Lead up prior to Match Day or Training

- The proactive plan should commence in the days before the activity, where weather forecasts provide important warning of possible thunderstorm activity.
- The St Ives AFL Club Ground Manager will monitor weather forecasts leading up to scheduled matches using the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) website. Note should be taken off any warnings posted.
- Relevant information is to be distributed to all Match Day Ground Managers prior to the start of the first game.

#### 1.2 Match Day

- If the threat continues into game day the St Ives AFL Ground Manager should contact the game day Ground Managers to discuss the situation.
- Regular updates must be sought from the BOM in the period leading up to the match commencement time, perhaps involving the game Ground Manager, competing Clubs and an umpire.
- **If lightning is predicted, or is judged to be occurring within 10km of the match venue at the scheduled starting time the game commencement time may be delayed by up to 60 minutes on the St Ives AFL club Ground Manager or match Ground Manager judgement.**

#### 1.3 Training

- If advice from the Club Ground Manager suggests that lightning is a threat then teams will not train.
- If a lightning threat emerges during a training session, the coach at training session must judge if a risk, or if lightning is **judged to be occurring within 10km of the training venue, training must be cancelled.**

#### 1.4 Taking Shelter

- If it is determined that the lightning threat is real then all persons at the venue should leave the training venue immediately and take shelter inside a building or metal framed car.
- They must not shelter under or near trees.
- Once the storm's path has been reassessed, there must be a minimum of 30minutes elapsed before returning to training/game.

## **1.5 The 30/30 Rule for suspension and resumption**

The “30/30” rule serves as a guide for the suspension and subsequent resumption of activities. The overall principle is to seek shelter when the lightning activity is too close.

### **1.5.1 How far away is the Lightning?**

The observation of approaching storm clouds, the first flash of lightning or clap of thunder, no matter how far away should heighten lightning awareness. The level of risk depends on one’s location (direction and distance) relative to the storm cell and the direction in which the storm system is traveling.

A simple method of determining the distance to the storm cell is to measure the time elapsed from when the lightning flash is observed and when the associated clap of thunder is heard. Light travels faster than sound. Assuming that the light from the flash reaches the observer instantaneously and knowing that sound takes approximately three (3) seconds to travel one (1) kilometre, the distance can be determined by using the following rule:

*Distance (in Km) = Time from observing the flash to hearing thunder (in secs) / 3*

It is important to remember that lightning may be obscured by clouds so it must be assumed that when thunder is heard, lightning is in the vicinity. In such cases, careful judgment must be used to determine whether a threat exists.

### **1.5.2 The 30/30 Rule for suspension and resumption**

The first part of the “30/30” rule is a guide to the postponement or suspension of activities. Most experts agree that the accepted „safe” distance from lightning is less than 10km. This means that as the time interval between observing the flash and hearing the thunder approaches 30 seconds, all those in exposed areas should be seeking or already inside safe shelters. A storm cell with lightning activity within 10km constitutes a threat.

The second part of the 30/30 rule provides the criteria for the resumption of activity which is applicable to decisions made with BOM access as well. Here, it is recommended that people wait a minimum of 30 minutes after the last sighting of lightning or sound of thunder. This figure is based on the observation that the typical storm moves at about 40km/h. Thus, waiting 30 minutes allows the thunderstorm to be about 20km away, minimising the likelihood of a nearby lightning strike.

It is important to emphasize that blue skies and lack of rainfall are not adequate reasons to breach the 30 minute minimum return-to-activity rule.