

## SEVERE WEATHER GUIDELINES (2021)

What denotes severe weather?

- Where the severity of the weather puts athlete safety at risk, or where there is risk to the safety of officials or volunteers.
- Environment Canada's declarations of severe weather conditions (cold, hot, air quality, lightning, storm, etc) is to be considered a primary indicator for determining if weather is indeed 'severe.' When alerts and cautions are stated by Environment Canada, our members are required to adhere to those cautions.

Who decides if the weather is severe?

- At an event, the lead Official, along with the Meet Director, will decide when to suspend or conclude competitions due to severe weather based on Environment Canada cautions/statements. Continuation of said competition will be at the dictate of above as well.
- At a practice, coaches and athletes will determine if the practice should be cancelled or postponed due to severe weather based on the Environment Canada cautions/statements.

What happens if an event or practice is cancelled due to severe weather?

- Everyone involved should seek appropriate shelter or simply leave the event/practice if appropriate and safe to do so.

Recommendations:

- Environment Canada and The National Lightning Safety Institute (USA) both recommend that the "30 – 30 Rule" be utilized to determine when it is necessary to seek proper shelter to avoid the lightning hazard. If it is necessary to be outside when thunderstorms are in the region, stay near proper shelter and use the "30 –30 Rule" to determine when it is necessary to seek appropriate shelter. What is the 30-30 rule? Basically, when you see lightning, count the time until you hear thunder. If this time is 30 seconds or less, seek proper shelter. If you can't see the lightning, just hearing the thunder is a good back-up rule. Wait 30 minutes or more after hearing the last thunder before leaving shelter. The best shelter commonly available against lightning is a large fully enclosed, substantially constructed building. Substantially constructed means it has wiring and plumbing in the walls. (ie. not a picnic shelter, under a tree, or under a picnic table, etc)

- Poor air quality can adversely affect our athletes and everyone involved in outdoor activities. Use the [online air quality health index map for Alberta](#) or the [mobile app](#) to determine air quality in your area. An air quality rating of 7 or higher should suspend all outdoor activities. An air quality rating of 4-6 should result in attention to symptoms (coughing, scratchy eyes, sore throat, etc) and suspend activity or reduce activity.
- Extreme heat can adversely affect our athletes and everyone involved in outdoor activities. As a best practice, training and competing above 32 degrees should be done so with care and attention to wind, shade, hydration, and overall well-being. Signs of heat exhaustion and stroke can be [found on this document](#). Again, if Environment Canada issues a heat warning or alert, use this as a determinant for safety.

Best Practice:

- At no time should an athlete, official, meet director, coach, or anyone involved in our sport be maligned, intimidated, coerced, or bullied into activity if they feel unsafe or unwell to participate. Behaviour of this kind will not be tolerated as indicated in our [Code of Conduct & Ethics](#).

References:

<https://www.alberta.ca/about-the-air-quality-health-index.aspx>  
<https://www.ccohs.ca/topics/hazards/physical/temperature/>