Tournament Host
SEVERE WEATHER REQUIREMENTS
(Thunder, Lightning, and Heat Index)

The Southeast Region Tournament Director may require the use Lightning Detection and Heat Index software such as Weather Bug and the OSHA NIOSH Heat Index applications, available for Android and iPhone cell phones.

The official rule is as follows – Proactive Planning:

1. Assign staff to monitor local weather conditions before and during events.

2. Develop an evacuation plan, including identification of appropriate nearby shelters.

3. Develop criteria for delay or suspension and resumption of play:

a. When thunder is heard, or a cloud-to-ground lightning bolt is seen, the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Umpires should suspend play and all participants and spectators should take shelter immediately.

b. Thirty-minute rule. Once play has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or flash of lightning is witnessed prior to resuming play.

c. Any subsequent thunder or lightning after the beginning of the 30-minute count, reset the clock and another 30-minute count should begin.

4. Hold periodic reviews for appropriate personnel.

Adopted by the SER on February 13, 2013.

References:

- NFHS Guidelines on Handling Contests During Lightning Disturbances [Revised October 2014]

- NFHS Sports Medicine Handbook [Fourth Edition, 2011]

5. All games and field activities must be delayed when the Heat Index reaches and (or) exceeds 103 °F. Games and activities cannot resume until the Heat Index temperature is below 103 °F.

How we handle Severe Weather actions:

It is a basic understanding that safety comes first, and it is always better to error on the side of safety.

Any umpire, Tournament Director, Regional Representative, and County or City Parks official, if applicable, can make the call to evacuate the facility. During a game, the decision to stop play, made by other than an umpire, must be conveyed to the plate umpire so that immediate action can be taken.