



# HYS – Inclement Weather Policy

## Purpose

At Holden Youth Soccer, the safety of our players, coaches, and spectators is our top priority. In the event of inclement weather, the following policy will be in effect to ensure the well-being of all participants.

It is strongly recommended that coaches all have the latest weather apps loaded on their phones. These apps should include instant weather conditions and lightning strike notification.

Conditions in one location may be very different from another, especially the further apart the two locations are. The coaches are responsible for keeping informed of the weather conditions at home, along their route to the game and at the game site. The coaches are also responsible for communications with the opposing coach and their own team in the event of inclement weather.

## 1. Weather Conditions to Monitor

- **Storms & Heavy Rain:** Severe storms can produce high winds, heavy rain, hail, lightning, thunder and/or tornados. If a severe storm approaches the playing area, the safety of the players is the number one priority of coaches and referees and may require that the game be suspended while shelter is sought. In the event the game is suspended, ALL participants MUST clear the field immediately and move into their cars or other permanent shelter.
- High winds can create problems by dust and debris being in the air or blowing over objects. Heavy rain can create hazardous field conditions or lead to flash flooding. Hail can cause injury. Tornados are obvious dangers of any severe storm. Use common sense and seek shelter as appropriate. Games and practices may be canceled if heavy rain leads to unsafe field conditions, such as flooding or poor visibility.
- Rain alone is typically not a reason to cancel a game or practice.
- **Thunderstorms and Lightning:** Lightning is the second leading cause of storm-related deaths (flooding is first). Lightning can strike up to 10 miles outside of a thunderstorm. The danger from lightning can persist for 20-30 minutes or more after a thunderstorm has passed. The National Weather Service does not issue watches or warnings for lightning by itself. However, the National Weather Service does advise that if you see a lightning bolt and hear the thunder in 30 seconds or less, you seek shelter and wait 30 minutes before resuming outdoor activity.
- If a person can hear thunder, or see lightning, the danger already is present. A clear, sunny sky overhead with storm clouds nearby can still be dangerous. If lightning is within five miles, with or without hearing thunder, the game(s) or practice(s) should be suspended and shelter sought. A lightning detector or similar app can identify the distance accurately but may not be available. A



rough guideline is to measure the time between the lightning flash and hearing the corresponding thunder. If it is 30 seconds or less, seek shelter. It may not be possible to determine which lightning strike generated which roll of thunder.

- Mass Youth Soccer recommends that participants seek immediate shelter in their automobiles or a designated severe weather shelter, if there is one nearby. Smaller, open structures, tents, trees, isolated areas, etc, should be avoided. Cars, with windows rolled up or buses, can provide good shelter. Avoid contact with metal or other conducting materials to the outside surfaces. Do not stay in open, unprotected areas.
- Games should not be restarted for at least 30 minutes after the last lightning strike is seen or roll of thunder is heard.
- It is likely that if a game is suspended in Holden due to lighting, unless you are the last game of the day the game will likely be cancelled due to other games planned for the same field.
- **Hot Weather:** Heat is a problem when it prevents the body from cooling itself. The hotter the body gets, the more likely it is to increase fatigue levels, develop cramps and increase the possibility of heat exhaustion and heat stroke. The hotter and more humid the weather, the faster these problems can develop. Temperatures as low as 65 degrees, with a relative humidity of 100%, can be serious.
- A heat index chart should be given to every coach and referee ([www.nws.noaa.gov](http://www.nws.noaa.gov)). Games need to be adjusted as the heat index rises:
  - Mandatory water breaks
  - Go to quarters
  - Shorten the games
- HYS Board members are responsible for monitoring the heat and keeping the participating teams and game officials informed of the heat index. Coaches are encouraged to also monitor the conditions. The following are recommended when there is a possibility of dangerous high heat index:

Heat Index	Recommendations
Up to 84°	Normal Play
85° – 89°	Mandatory two-minute water breaks per half with running time.
90° – 99°	Mandatory two-minute water breaks per half with running time. Each half shortened by five minutes.
100° – 104°	Mandatory two-minute water breaks per half with running time. Each half shortened by ten minutes.
105°+	Suspend Play

Apply the above recommendations to both games and other soccer activities.



**Cold Weather:** For fall play, cold becomes a factor. Players should be allowed to dress in appropriate clothing. Field conditions will be affected by freezing rain, sleet and snow. The ground may become frozen and be unsafe for play. Temperature means either ambient (still air) or wind chill index. Check weather radio frequently for temperature and weather conditions.

Cold Index	Recommendations
46° and higher	No Change
45° and lower	<p>Allowable Additional Clothing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Layered beneath uniform (for example) - long sleeves, long pants, additional socks</li> <li>Gloves or mittens</li> <li>Stocking caps without straps</li> <li>Sweatpants or shirts – In the case of extremely cold weather, may be worn underneath the uniform, provided the entire team uses the same color sweats</li> <li>Jackets may be worn under the uniform so that referees can see the player's number in the event of a card being issued.</li> </ul> <p>Clothing NOT Allowed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hooded sweatshirts - hoods and strings present the possibility of being grabbed</li> <li>Earmuffs (headbands OK) - plastic or metal part crossing top of head presents potential hazard</li> <li>Scarves - Isadora Duncan Syndrome</li> </ul>
40° and lower	Above + Shorten games by 5 min/half
35° and lower	Suspend games

- Apply the above recommendations to both games and other soccer activities.
- Players on sidelines should remain dressed (if in warm-ups) until they enter the game.
- Players coming off should towel off (if sweaty) and get dressed quickly.
- No one should sit or lie directly on ground. The heat is lost faster to ground than to air. Blankets and chairs are recommended.
- Keep hydrated-avoid caffeine and carbonated drinks.
- Keep an eye on field conditions (wet, icy, etc.). Cold wet conditions can quickly change field from safe footing to slippery.
- Keep an eye on the goalie - usually the player who gets coldest first, as not running or moving like a field player.
- Referees and coaches should discuss weather and fields pre-game.
- Safety and health of the players come first.



## 2. Decision-Making Authority

- The decision to cancel or suspend games and practices will be made by the HYS Board of Directors, or designated field supervisors (referee officials). Their assessment will consider safety, field conditions, and weather forecasts.
- For travel games the referee has the authority to supersede decisions made by the HYS Boards of Directors, including game cancellations for unsafe conditions, heat or cold index condition accommodations and lightning postponements.
- A coach cannot decide whether to cancel or continue with a game based on weather conditions. A coach may choose to cancel a practice based on weather conditions and forecast if it does not conflict with the guidance from HYS.
- Please bear in mind that not all HYS fields are equal, we may close one set of fields but keep others open. Be aware which field location you would be impacted by.

## 3. Notification Procedures

- Updates will be posted on the Holden Youth Soccer website, and social media channels.
- An e-mail from the Age Group Director or delegate will also be sent to coaches and parents.
- Coaches will communicate decisions regarding cancellations or delays to players and parents as soon as possible through email, text messages, or team communication apps, including opposing coaches for travel home games.

## 5. Safety Considerations

- Players should always come prepared for changing weather conditions, including appropriate clothing for both hot and cold weather, as well as hydration.
- It is not the intent of HYS to override a parent's decision. Parents certainly retain the right to decide if their child will participate in a game during inclement weather. HYS will make every effort to consider the safety and health of the children in our program, while also recognizing that soccer is a worldwide sport played in a variety of weather conditions.

By adhering to this inclement weather policy, Holden Youth Soccer aims to prioritize safety while continuing to provide an enjoyable soccer experience for all participants. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

If in doubt as to a game being played:

- If you are a coach, check the website or call your Age Group Director.
- If you are a parent, check the website or contact your coach or assistant coach.
- If the website says the field is open and you do not receive a notification to the contrary, assume the game is being played.