



SEVERE WEATHER POLICY

FOOTBALL ONTARIO

1. Introduction

Player, coach, team management, and spectator safety is our utmost concern during any weather event that occurs during all practices and games sanctioned by Football Ontario. To greatly increase everyone's safety, understanding and adhering to the following guidelines is important. The final decision regarding the delay or resumption of a practice or game due to severe weather rests with the official or the designated authority. A failure to stop practice or a game, or a premature start may result in serious injury or fatality. All responsible parties are expected to act diligently when such situations arise during activities they oversee.

Severe weather may be defined as, but is not limited to, the following conditions:

- Lightning
 - Excessive heat
 - Excessive winds
 - Excessive rain
 - Air quality
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2. Lightning

Each year lightning kills two to three Canadians and injures approximately 180 others. Outdoor recreational enthusiasts account for 70% of the victims killed and 62% of the injuries. (Environment Canada).

2.1 To plan for a safe day, check the weather forecast first. If the event is held in a region that can typically be affected by lightning or if lightning producing storms are forecasted, be aware of the field surroundings and locate a place to take shelter if needed. When a severe storm is on the horizon, Environment Canada will issue weather warnings on their website.

2.2 Watch the skies for developing thunderstorms and listen for thunder.

Throughout the day, continue to monitor forecasts, weather warnings and

[Environment Canada's Lightning Danger Maps.](#)



Lightning often strikes outside the area of heavy rain and may strike as far as 16km (10 miles) from any rainfall. Depending on atmospheric conditions, you can hear thunder from as far away as 20 km, or as close as 8 km (Environment Canada).

The first and most important thing to remember is that if you can hear thunder, you are within striking distance of lightning, suspend play, clear the Field of Play and take appropriate shelter.

2.3 If you hear thunder, get to a safe place.

Large groups, such as football teams, require more time for a proper evacuation. As the time requirement changes, the distance at which lightning is noted and considered a threat should also increase.

The best shelter would be located in a substantial building, i.e. buildings with wiring and plumbing are the safest. Once inside, stay away from windows, doors and anything that conducts electricity such as corded phones, wiring, appliances, plumbing and anything connected to these.

In the absence of a building at the event site, hard-topped metal vehicles with the windows closed also provide good protection. Avoid contact with metal in the vehicle and try to keep away from windows.

Finally, if you absolutely cannot get to safety, you can slightly lessen the threat of being struck with the following tips.

- Get out of open fields: If you are caught in an open field, do not lay flat on the ground. If you cannot seek shelter, kneel on the ground with your feet together, your hands on your knees and your body bent forward (Canadian Red Cross). Do not lie flat on the ground.
- Stay away from tall, isolated trees or other tall objects. If you are in a forest, stay near a lower stand of trees.

2.4 Continue delay for 30 minutes. Field of Play activities will resume no less than 30 minutes after the last rumble of thunder.

2.5 First Aid. Giving first aid to lightning strike victims while waiting for professional medical attention can save their lives.

- Lightning strike victims do not carry an electrical charge and can be handled safely.
- Call for help. Victims may be in shock or have burns, and should receive medical attention immediately. Call 911 or your local ambulance service.
- Administer first aid. If breathing has stopped, administer CPR. Use an automatic external defibrillator if available.



3. Excessive Heat

Climate modeling indicates Canadian cities will see an increase in the number of hot days (with a temperature high of 30°C) in the future. Football being an “outdoor” sport, the risk of heat exposure is ever present. Players are responsible for their own safety and should take appropriate precautions such as wearing appropriate clothing under equipment, hats (when possible), and long sleeve shirts, use sun screen and drink water on a regular basis.

3.1 Postponement/Cancelation. Environment Canada issues Heat and Humidex Advisories when temperatures are expected to reach or exceed 30°C/ 86°F and/or the Humidex value (a combination of humidity and temperature) is expected to reach or exceed 40 on the Humidex scale of perceived temperature. Environment Canada developed a humidex rating chart to announce when heat and humidity may be uncomfortable to people which is an effective guide for assessing risk. (see Appendix 1).

3.2. Time of Day. If a heat advisory has been issued, event scheduling should avoid the hottest part of the day (usually 11 am-3 pm).

3.3 Monitor. For local monitoring, either Humidex or Heat index (see Appendix 3) may be used, in addition to local weather radar or Environment Canada. On the day of the event the ambient temperature shall be monitored as follows:

- Before beginning the activity, the temperature and humidity should be considered, using the Humidex or Heat index chart.
- When ambient temperature/humidex/Heat index are between 31C-39.9C notice for participants to take added precautions, stay hydrated, and take breaks in shaded areas when possible.

3.4 First Aid. Heat-related emergencies occur when the body becomes dehydrated, which may result in an increased body temperature. Heat cramps, heat exhaustion, or heat stroke, can happen to anyone who stays in the summer heat and sun for too long. When someone appears to be suffering from heat related distress:

- Remove from heat
- Direct the victim to loosen tight clothing / equipment
- If necessary, take steps to cool them off by pouring water on torso in the case of heat stroke
- Provide a cool drink if conscious



Watch for symptoms of heat illness, such as:

- Dizziness or fainting
- Nausea or vomiting
- Headache
- Rapid breathing and heartbeat
- Extreme thirst
- Decreased urination with unusually dark yellow urine
- Changes of behaviour in children

Heat stroke is a medical emergency. Call 911 or your local emergency number if heat stroke is suspected.

4. Excessive Wind:

Excessive wind (60-65km/hr or more with gusting up to 90km/hr or more) is a condition that results in target stands, umbrellas, tents and other venue equipment to fall over or be blown away. This is dangerous to all people in the vicinity and events should be delayed/postponed until winds subside.

4.1 Tornadoes

Each year on average, about 17 tornadoes occur across Ontario and Quebec. The peak of the season is June through August. [Environment Canada](#) provides up to date information on tornado conditions, storm maps and weather warnings.

- **A tornado warning** means a tornado is already occurring or will occur soon in your area. Evacuate if advised to do so.
- **A tornado watch** means a tornado is possible in your area. Stay alert for more information.
- If a tornado watch or warning has been issued for the area of the event prior to the start, the game/ practice should be postponed until the warning or watch has been lifted.

4.1.1 Watch for danger signs:

- Dark, often greenish or orange-grey skies.
- Large hail
- Large, dark, low-lying, rotating or funnel-shaped clouds
- Roaring noise- similar to the sound of a freight train

4.1.2 Take action if a tornado strikes:

- If there is the threat of a tornado while the tournament is taking place, stop all play, direct all participants to take cover.
- If possible, move at a right angle to the storm's path.
- Find a low-lying area, such as a ditch, and lie flat. Hang onto a small tree shrub if you can, and/or shield your head with your arms.
- If you are in a car, mobile home or other temporary shelter, get out immediately and head for safety. It is unsafe to stay in your vehicle as it could be picked up, blown over or roll over you.



5. Excessive Rain:

Excessive rain is a condition that results in the field becoming flooded. This situation is not conducive to a well-run event and competition management (e.g., officials) should weigh the possible continuation of the game or practice.

Consideration should be given to slip and trip hazards, and the risk of injury or damage of equipment during severe rain.

In cold and wet conditions consideration should also be given to hypothermia.

As power is required for many games and practices, consideration should be given to the hazard of water and electricity and appropriate action taken.

6. Air Quality

Air quality conditions can vary significantly by region and may change quickly. Member organizations are responsible for monitoring the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI), information from the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, local public health authorities, and prevailing weather forecasts when making decisions regarding games, practices and other outdoor activities.

6.1 Cancellation/Rescheduling. If the AQHI reaches 7 or higher (high risk), outdoor football activities must be cancelled or rescheduled. Particular caution should be taken with children and youth, who may be more vulnerable to the effects of air pollution.

6.2 Local Guidance Below AQHI 7. Outdoor activities may also be cancelled or rescheduled when the AQHI is below 7 if recommended by local public health, municipal, facility, school board, emergency management or other applicable authorities.

6.3 Regional Monitoring and Communication. Organizations must monitor conditions in their local area and promptly communicate any cancellations, postponements or schedule changes to affected participants. Football Ontario may provide regional direction or updates where appropriate.

Appendix 1: Definitions

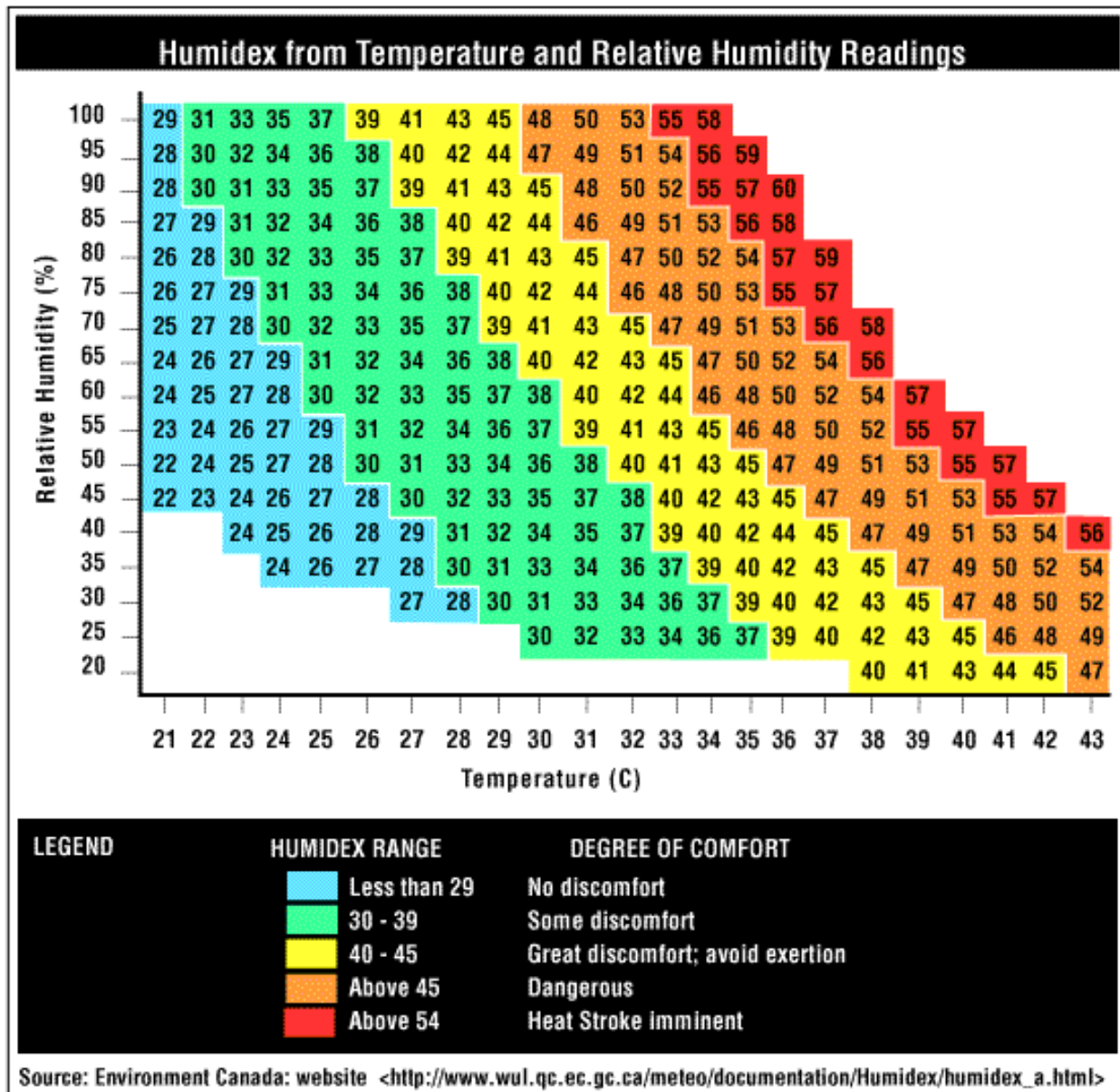
Cancellation - a point at which the current competition phase is stopped and the determination is made that the schedule cannot be adjusted to complete the phase.

Delay - a smaller increment of time, i.e. 15 or 30 minutes, after which competition may resume.

Disruption/Postponement - a larger increment of time, i.e. 2+ hours, after which competition may resume.



Appendix 2: Environment Canada's Humidex Comfort Ratings





Appendix 3: NOAA Heat Index

NOAA national weather service: heat index

		Temperature															
		80 °F (27 °C)	82 °F (28 °C)	84 °F (29 °C)	86 °F (30 °C)	88 °F (31 °C)	90 °F (32 °C)	92 °F (33 °C)	94 °F (34 °C)	96 °F (36 °C)	98 °F (37 °C)	100 °F (38 °C)	102 °F (39 °C)	104 °F (40 °C)	106 °F (41 °C)	108 °F (42 °C)	110 °F (43 °C)
Relative humidity	40%	80 °F (27 °C)	81 °F (27 °C)	83 °F (28 °C)	85 °F (29 °C)	88 °F (31 °C)	91 °F (33 °C)	94 °F (34 °C)	97 °F (36 °C)	101 °F (38 °C)	105 °F (41 °C)	109 °F (43 °C)	114 °F (46 °C)	119 °F (48 °C)	124 °F (51 °C)	130 °F (54 °C)	136 °F (56 °C)
	45%	80 °F (27 °C)	82 °F (28 °C)	84 °F (29 °C)	87 °F (31 °C)	89 °F (32 °C)	93 °F (34 °C)	96 °F (36 °C)	100 °F (38 °C)	104 °F (40 °C)	109 °F (43 °C)	114 °F (46 °C)	119 °F (48 °C)	124 °F (51 °C)	130 °F (54 °C)	137 °F (58 °C)	
	50%	81 °F (27 °C)	83 °F (28 °C)	85 °F (29 °C)	88 °F (31 °C)	91 °F (33 °C)	95 °F (35 °C)	99 °F (37 °C)	103 °F (39 °C)	108 °F (42 °C)	113 °F (45 °C)	118 °F (48 °C)	124 °F (51 °C)	131 °F (55 °C)	137 °F (58 °C)		
	55%	81 °F (27 °C)	84 °F (29 °C)	86 °F (30 °C)	89 °F (32 °C)	93 °F (34 °C)	97 °F (36 °C)	101 °F (38 °C)	106 °F (41 °C)	112 °F (44 °C)	117 °F (47 °C)	124 °F (51 °C)	130 °F (54 °C)	137 °F (58 °C)			
	60%	82 °F (28 °C)	84 °F (29 °C)	88 °F (31 °C)	91 °F (33 °C)	95 °F (35 °C)	100 °F (38 °C)	105 °F (41 °C)	110 °F (43 °C)	116 °F (47 °C)	123 °F (51 °C)	129 °F (54 °C)	137 °F (58 °C)				
	65%	82 °F (28 °C)	85 °F (29 °C)	89 °F (32 °C)	93 °F (34 °C)	98 °F (37 °C)	103 °F (39 °C)	108 °F (42 °C)	114 °F (46 °C)	121 °F (49 °C)	128 °F (53 °C)	136 °F (58 °C)					
	70%	83 °F (28 °C)	86 °F (30 °C)	90 °F (32 °C)	95 °F (35 °C)	100 °F (38 °C)	105 °F (41 °C)	112 °F (44 °C)	119 °F (48 °C)	126 °F (52 °C)	134 °F (57 °C)						
	75%	84 °F (29 °C)	88 °F (31 °C)	92 °F (33 °C)	97 °F (36 °C)	103 °F (39 °C)	109 °F (43 °C)	116 °F (47 °C)	124 °F (51 °C)	132 °F (56 °C)							
	80%	84 °F (29 °C)	89 °F (32 °C)	94 °F (34 °C)	100 °F (38 °C)	106 °F (41 °C)	113 °F (45 °C)	121 °F (49 °C)	129 °F (54 °C)								
	85%	85 °F (29 °C)	90 °F (32 °C)	96 °F (36 °C)	102 °F (39 °C)	110 °F (43 °C)	117 °F (47 °C)	126 °F (52 °C)	135 °F (57 °C)								
	90%	86 °F (30 °C)	91 °F (33 °C)	98 °F (37 °C)	105 °F (41 °C)	113 °F (45 °C)	122 °F (50 °C)	131 °F (55 °C)									
	95%	86 °F (30 °C)	93 °F (34 °C)	100 °F (38 °C)	108 °F (42 °C)	117 °F (47 °C)	127 °F (53 °C)										
100%	87 °F (31 °C)	95 °F (35 °C)	103 °F (39 °C)	112 °F (44 °C)	121 °F (49 °C)	132 °F (56 °C)											

Key to colors:

Caution

Extreme caution

Danger

Extreme danger