

NSW RACE CLUBS LIGHTNING SAFETY PROCEDURES

WHY DO WE NEED A LIGHTNING SAFETY PLAN?

Each year, thunderstorms produce severe weather hazards which cause casualties during outdoor sport and recreational activities. Race Clubs have therefore introduced a Lightning Safety Plan.

WHAT IS THE LIGHTNING SAFETY PLAN?

The Lightning Safety Plan is based on what is known as the "30/30" rule, which relates to the duration between the flash of lightning and clap of thunder. This duration is used as a measure of the proximity of the storm and therefore as a denominator in deciding whether to suspend outdoor activities.

HOW DOES THE 30/30 RULE WORK?

The rule of thumb is that every three (3) seconds of delay between a lightning flash and the audible thunder associated with the flash equates to a distance of approximately one (1) kilometre. Accordingly, the thirty (30) seconds flash-to-thunder time interval suggests that the lightning activity is approximately ten (10) kilometres away.

WHEN SHOULD ACTIVITY BE SUSPENDED AND SUBSEQUENTLY RESUMED?

All persons should take cover if the flash-to-thunder delay is thirty (30) seconds or less. After the storm has seemingly passed, all persons should remain under cover until thirty (30) minutes after the final flash of lightning or clap of thunder as trailing storm clouds still carry a lingering charge.

WHICH LOCATIONS ARE SAFE TO SEEK SHELTER?

The following locations would normally be regarded as the most appropriate to seek shelter:

- the safest location is inside a large enclosed structure, preferably with electrical/telephone wiring and plumbing (to provide a safe pathway to the ground for any current) but keeping away from doors, windows, metal fittings and devices connected to the electricity supply;
- an enclosed metal vehicle such as a car, van or bus.

WHICH LOCATIONS ARE UNSAFE?

The following locations should be avoided:

- buildings with exposed openings;
- small structures or sheds;
- open field/racecourse;
- in close proximity to the tallest localised structure (eg. surveillance tower, tree, light pole, antenna);
- umbrellas;
- swimming pools, lakes or water generally (eg. showering).

Persons should also refrain from contacting metal objects or using the telephone, computers or any other devices connected to electrical phone lines.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTING THE LIGHTNING SAFETY PLAN?

- On racedays, the Club Secretary Manager/Chief Executive (CEO) and Chief Steward should ensure the Plan is implemented;
- On non-racedays (eg. commercial function), the Club Secretary Manager/CEO or representative;
- During trackwork, the Trackwork Supervisor or Crossing Attendant.

WHAT IF SOMEBODY IS STRUCK BY LIGHTNING?

Immediately seek medical assistance and/or an ambulance. However, first aid is required urgently if a person has been struck by lightning. Expired Air Resuscitation ("EAR" – more commonly known as "mouth-to-mouth" resuscitation) can be applied if a person is not breathing but still has a pulse. In the absence of a pulse, cardio pulmonary resuscitation ("CPR") should be used.