

Thunderstorm, Lightning & High Winds

Use this document to respond to a thunderstorm, lightning, or high winds during a special event. Event organizers should monitor appropriate weather services before and during any event.

When to Seek Shelter / Suspend Activities

The “Flash-To-Bang” theory measures the time from when you see lightning to the time you hear the associated thunder. A measure of 5 seconds from Flash-To-Bang means lightning is one mile away. Ten seconds equals 2 miles; 15 seconds equals 3 miles, etc. When the Flash-to-Bang count is 30 seconds, it’s time to seek safe shelter. However, you should be aware of its pitfall. It is sometimes hard to associate the proper clap of thunder to the corresponding flash.

1. Count the number of seconds between the lightning flash and the sound of the thunder and divide that number by five. That number is the number of miles the storm is away from you.
2. If you can hear thunder, the storm is close enough that lightning could strike your location at any moment!
3. If you hear it—clear it!
4. Do not resume outdoor activities until 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder.

Distance	Safety Action
Less than 10 miles from any venue point	• Event activities should be suspended. • All participants should immediately seek shelter.
10-50 miles from any venue point	• Event staff closely monitors the weather. • Event staff prepares to shelter. • On site leader reviews notification process. • Event participants are notified of possible severe weather; voluntary evacuation begins.
Greater than 50 miles any venue point	• Event staff monitors the weather. • All event staff are informed of possible severe weather; review emergency notification and response procedures.

High Winds

Event organizers must be vigilant of high winds and the impact the winds may have on high standing equipment, tents, stages, etc. These equipment types have different wind standards based on size, anchoring, and type. Event organizers should make every effort to understand the parameters and if the wind exceeds these parameters, immediately evacuate to a safe location.