BASEBALL ALBERTA
11759 Groat Road
Edmonton, Alberta
T5M 3K6
Phone: (780) 427-8943
Fax: (780) 427-9032
www.baseballalberta.com

BASEBALL ALBERTA
WEATHER POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

The safety of players, coaches, umpires, volunteers, and spectators is the primary concern in any weather event that occurs during games sanctioned by Baseball Alberta.

By understanding and following the below information provided and endorsed by Environment Canada and/or Alberta Environment, the safety of everyone shall be greatly increased. During Baseball Alberta league play, the host / home team and the umpire in chief have specific responsibilities as outlined in the Official Rules of Baseball in deciding to delay or restart a game due to weather related factors. At Baseball Alberta Provincial Championship events, the umpire in chief and the Baseball Alberta Tournament Director, if applicable, have the final decision over delaying or restarting a game due to weather related factors. Umpires and Baseball Alberta Tournament Directors are expected to act responsibly when dealing with such events during games they are controlling.

APPLICATION

This policy applies to all games sanctioned by Baseball Alberta including, league games, exhibition games, and Provincial Championship games.

LIGHTNING AND SEVERE WEATHER

When thunder roars, go indoors.

You can determine the approximate distance of lightning from your area by counting the number of seconds between the flash and the first sound of the thunder and dividing by three (3). This will give you the distance in kilometers from your location.

The problem lies in that people need to be in a safe location (not a dugout!) before the count reaches 30. For instance if one counts 35 seconds, people should be finding a safe location to shelter in.

Additional Information

Please note the following recommendations from Environment Canada:

The existence of blue sky and absence of rain are not protection from lightning. Lightning can and does strike as far as fifteen (15) kilometers away from the rain shaft. It does not have to be raining for lightning to strike. Many lightning casualties occur in the beginning, as the storm

approaches, because many people ignore initial precursors of high winds, some rainfall and cloud cover, or after the system moves past. The risk of being struck by lightning may persist for more than thirty (30) minutes so shelter in place until 30 minutes after the last rumble of thunder.

Lightning can strike ahead or behind the parent cloud – take action even if the thunderstorm is not overhead.

Be aware of how close lightning is occurring. The flash-to-bang method is the easiest and most convenient way to estimate how far away lightning is occurring. Thunder always accompanies lightning, even though its audible range can be diminished due to background noise in the immediate environment and its distance from the observer.

Lightning awareness should be increased with the first flash of lightning or the first clap of thunder, no matter how far away. This activity must be treated as a wake-up call to all. The most important aspect to monitor is how far away the lightning is occurring, and how fast the storm is approaching, relative to the distance of a safe shelter for everyone.

Recognize that personal observation of lightning may not be sufficient. Additional weather information may be required to ensure consistency, accuracy and adequate advance warning. There is a Canadian Lightning Danger Map available at http://weather.gc.ca/lightning/index_e.html that can help identify where recent lightning has struck.

When larger groups are involved, the time needed to properly evacuate an area increases. As time requirements change, the distance at which lightning is noted and considered a threat to move into the area must be increased. Extending the range used to determine threat potential also increases the chance that a localized cell or thunderstorm may not reach the area giving the impression of a "false alarm".

Know where the closest "safe structure or location" is to the field or playing area and know how long it takes to get to that safe structure or location.

Safe structure or location is defined as:

Any building normally occupied or frequently used by people, i.e., a building with plumbing and / or electrical wiring that acts to electrically ground the structure. Avoid using the showers or plumbing facilities during a thunderstorm.

In the absence of a sturdy, frequently inhabited building, any vehicle with a hard metal roof (not a convertible or golf cart) and rolled-up windows can provide a measure of safety. A vehicle is certainly better than remaining outdoors. It is not the rubber tires that make a vehicle a safe shelter, but the hard metal roof which dissipates the lightning strike around the vehicle.

Do not touch the sides of any vehicle!

Avoid using the telephone, except in emergency situations. People have been struck by lightning while using a land-line telephone. A cellular phone or a portable remote phone is a safe alternative to land-line phones, if the person and the antenna are located within a safe structure or location, and if all other precautions are followed.

When considering resumption of any athletics activity, it is recommended that everyone should ideally wait at least thirty (30) minutes after the last sound of thunder before returning to the field.

People who have been struck by lightning do not carry an electrical charge. Therefore, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is safe for the responder. If possible, an injured person should be moved to a safer location before starting CPR. Lightning-strike victims who show signs of cardiac or respiratory arrest need emergency help quickly. Prompt, aggressive CPR has been highly effective for the survival of victims of lightning strikes.

For additional information, the following websites are helpful:

Canadian Lightning Danger Map: https://weather.gc.ca/lightning/index_e.html
Lightning safety for soccer video: http://www.ec.gc.ca/foudre-lightning/default.asp?lang=En&n=54B219E5-1
Lightning safety for large outdoors venue: http://www.ec.gc.ca/foudre-lightning/default.asp?lang=En&n=90CC153A-1
Lightning in Canada: http://www.ec.gc.ca/foudre-lightning/default.asp?lang=En&n=BEC25F94-1

AIR QUALITY

AQHI of 7 or higher means that play should be stopped immediately.

The Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) is a recognized risk management measurement which describes a local reading of air quality as it relates to human health. The AQHI is not real time reporting and can have a lag-time of over one hour. If air quality is changing during athletic activity, be aware of the common symptoms of irritated eyes, coughing, and difficulty breathing in addition to the reported AQHI index.

An AQHI index of over 7 indicates a "high risk" from air pollutants.

An AQHI index of between 4 and 6 indicates ongoing AQHI air monitoring should be initiated in order to identify to the umpire and Tournament Director if the index should reach 7 or higher. In practice situations, athletic activity should be adjusted through reduced intensity, educed duration, and providing rest periods.

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Additional Information

In order to obtain the AQHI, go to https://weather.gc.ca/mainmenu/airquality_menu_e.html or http://environment.alberta.ca/apps/aqhi/aqhi.aspx. Baseball Alberta recommends using the Alberta website as it lists more specific stations. Air quality can be variable within a localized region like the greater Edmonton area even though stations such as Edmonton and St. Albert are in proximity to each other. The Alberta website information is also available as an app. Use the index value that is within one hour of the scheduled start time for the game or activity.

In addition to the AQHI, be aware of weather and other conditions. Conditions such as forest fires located some distance away, local burning of agricultural stubble, and sudden changes in wind direction and strength can all affect local air quality.

The AQHI is calculated differently for Alberta in two significant ways. First, in the rest of Canada, the AQHI only measures ground-level ozone, fine particulate matter (PM2.5) and nitrogen dioxide. In addition to these three pollutants, Alberta is more comprehensive by also including sulphur dioxide, hydrogen sulphide, total reduced sulphur and carbon monoxide in its AQHI reporting. Second, for the rest of Canada the AQHI is calculated on a 3-hour rolling average and so is less responsive to dramatic changes in air quality. It is for these reasons that the Alberta AQHI website is the best source of AQHI index values.

Individuals tend to rely on sensory perception to evaluate air quality when, in fact, the pollutants that present the greatest harm to human health are difficult to see or smell such as ground level ozone.

The AQHI treats an index value above 10+ as "Very High" with health messages for the "general" and "at risk" populations to reschedule all outdoor activities – strenuous or not. Athletes are in the "at-risk" population because of the intensity and duration of exposure to outdoor air quality.

For additional information, the following websites are helpful:

Environment Canada Air Quality: https://weather.gc.ca/mainmenu/airquality_menu_e.html
Alberta Environment AQHI: http://environment.alberta.ca/apps/aqhi/aqhi.aspx
Air Health: https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/air-quality-health-index.html
Alberta Air Quality Advisory Site: http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/news/air.aspx