

MIDWEST SUPER LEAGUE

Weather & Lightning Policy

2026-27 Season

Safety first. No match is worth a life.

Section 1: Lightning Policy

1.1 The 30/30 Rule

The MSL follows the 30/30 lightning safety rule:

- SUSPEND PLAY when the flash-to-bang count is 30 seconds or less (lightning is within 6 miles)
- DO NOT RESUME until 30 minutes after the last observed lightning or thunder

If you see lightning and hear thunder within 30 seconds, everyone must leave the field immediately.

1.2 Who Can Suspend Play

Any of the following individuals may suspend play due to lightning:

- The referee (primary authority during a match)
- The home club field marshal
- Either head coach

If any one of these individuals calls for a suspension, play stops immediately. No debate.

1.3 Shelter Procedures

When play is suspended for lightning:

- All players, coaches, referees, and spectators must seek shelter
- Substantial buildings or fully enclosed vehicles are safe shelters
- Open-sided shelters, dugouts, and metal bleachers are NOT safe
- Stay away from tall isolated objects (light poles, lone trees)
- Do not stand in open fields or on hilltops

1.4 Resuming Play

Play may resume only after 30 minutes have passed since the last observed lightning or audible thunder. Each new flash or thunder resets the 30-minute clock. The referee has final authority on resumption.

1.5 Match Abandonment

If a lightning delay exceeds 60 minutes, the match is abandoned. Rescheduling follows standard MSL postponement procedures (within 14 days).

Section 2: Extreme Heat Policy

2.1 Heat Index Thresholds

The MSL uses the following heat index guidelines for all matches:

Heat Index	Risk Level	Action Required
Below 80F	Low	Normal play
80F - 89F	Moderate	Mandatory water breaks each half
90F - 94F	High	Water breaks every 20 min, shorten halves by 5 min
95F - 104F	Very High	Delay, reschedule, or cancel the match
105F+	Extreme	Match MUST be canceled

Heat index should be measured at the field location at game time, not from a weather forecast alone.

2.2 Hydration Requirements

- Water must be available on the sideline for all players at all times
- Coaches must allow players to drink whenever they request it
- Referees should call official water breaks in high-heat conditions
- Players showing signs of heat illness must be removed from play immediately

Section 3: Cold Weather & Wind Policy

3.1 Wind Chill Thresholds

For fall and early spring matches in northern states:

- Wind chill above 35F: Normal play
- Wind chill 25F - 35F: Shortened halves (reduce by 5 minutes)
- Wind chill below 25F: Match should be postponed or canceled

3.2 Additional Cold Weather Guidance

- Players should be encouraged to wear appropriate layers
- Base layers, gloves, and headbands/ear covers are permitted
- Coaches should rotate players more frequently in cold conditions
- Warm shelter should be available for substitutes

3.3 Wet and Waterlogged Fields

Matches should not be played on fields with:

- Standing water on the playing surface
- Mud deep enough to cause unsafe footing
- Conditions that make sliding a safety hazard

The home club is responsible for assessing field conditions before kickoff. The referee has final authority on the field of play.

Section 4: Severe Weather (Tornadoes, Storms)

4.1 Tornado Watch

If a tornado WATCH is issued for the area, matches may proceed but all personnel should monitor conditions closely. Have a plan for immediate shelter.

4.2 Tornado Warning

If a tornado WARNING is issued for the area, all play must stop immediately. All players, coaches, referees, and spectators must seek appropriate shelter (interior rooms of substantial buildings, away from windows). The match is abandoned.

4.3 Severe Thunderstorm Warning

If a severe thunderstorm warning (winds 58+ mph, hail 1+ inch) is issued, matches should be suspended. Follow lightning shelter procedures. Resume only after the warning expires and 30 minutes have passed since last lightning/thunder.

4.4 Pre-Match Weather Assessment

Home clubs should monitor weather forecasts beginning 24 hours before a scheduled match. If dangerous conditions are expected, the home club should communicate with the visiting club and referee in advance. Proactive cancellation is preferred over game-time abandonment whenever possible.

Section 5: Decision Authority & Communication

5.1 Authority Hierarchy

- During a match: The referee has final authority
- Before kickoff: The home club decides in consultation with the referee
- Advance cancellation: Either club may request; league office coordinates

5.2 Communication Chain

When a match is delayed, suspended, or canceled due to weather:

- 1. Home club notifies visiting club immediately
- 2. Home club notifies the assigned referee
- 3. Home club reports to MSL league office within 24 hours
- 4. Rescheduling follows standard MSL postponement procedures

5.3 No Fault Policy

Weather cancellations carry no penalty for either team. There is no forfeit for weather-related postponements. The MSL encourages clubs to err on the side of safety. No one will be penalized for making a cautious call.