



**INTERNATIONAL
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WATERLOO**

Extreme Weather Policy & Protocol

Last Updated: June 20, 2025

The safety of players, coaches, management, and spectators is the primary concern during any weather event that occurs throughout all club activities. By understanding and following the information below, the overall safety of everyone involved can be greatly enhanced.

Ultimately, the referee (for games) or coach (for training sessions) has the final authority to delay or suspend a club activity due to weather. Delaying a stoppage or starting play prematurely may result in serious injury or even loss of life. Referees and coaches are expected to act responsibly when managing such situations during the matches or training sessions under their supervision.

This policy outlines the procedures for determining when and how matches and training sessions will proceed under specific weather conditions. It has been developed in alignment with **Environment Canada's definitions** and recommendations for extreme heat and cold, as well as **Canada Soccer's Lightning Safety and Severe Weather Policy**.

Finally, please note the below policies are simply guidelines for all membership. If you have any individual context or safety preferences that would influence whether you feel comfortable taking part in activities in certain weather conditions, please exercise your own discretion to attend an activity or not.

PRECIPITATION

Snowfall and rainfall (without an electrical storm) do not warrant the cancellation of club activities unless the respective facilities have been closed by the City of Waterloo.

The Club reserves the right to cancel training sessions at its discretion due to weather.

EXTREME HEAT

When air temperatures (including the humidex) reach the following thresholds one hour prior to club activities, the Club is advised to follow these guidelines:

Temperature of 32°C or lower:

All club activities (training sessions and matches) may proceed as normal.

Temperature between 32°C and 38°C:

All club activities may proceed with additional water breaks. For matches, it is at the discretion of the referee and/or coaches to provide more than one 2-minute water break per half.

If a team is unable to field the minimum number of players due to heat-related concerns, it is recommended that both the referee(s) and coaches agree to shorten the game by at least 10%.





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Temperature of 38°C or higher:

The Club may cancel all outdoor activities based on recommendations from the City of Waterloo.

In addition to air temperature, the Club may cancel activities one hour prior if the Air Quality Index is rated as "Poor" in the Region of Waterloo (as determined by Environment Canada).

LIGHTNING

In the event of thunder and/or lightning, WMSC follows the Canada Soccer Lightning Safety / Severe Weather Policy. The decision to suspend a game will be made by senior referees (for matches) and head coaches (for training sessions). They are encouraged to take a "better safe than sorry" approach during electrical storms.

All participants are advised to seek shelter in a safe location immediately.

Club activities must not resume until 30 minutes after the last sound of thunder or visible lightning.

AIR QUALITY

Monitoring Air Quality

Waterloo United will monitor Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) readings using Environment Canada's AQHI scale and/or local public health recommendations for Waterloo Region.

Air quality will be assessed on game days, training sessions, and camps, with real-time data reviewed 2–3 hours prior to outdoor activities.

Decision-Making Guidelines Based on AQHI

AQHI Level	Air Quality Risk	Action Taken
1–3	Low	Proceed with activities as normal.
4–6	Moderate	Proceed with caution. Limit intense exercise. Monitor players closely, especially those with asthma or respiratory issues.
7–10	High	Cancel or reschedule outdoor activities. Consider moving indoors if possible.
10+	Very High	All outdoor activities are cancelled or postponed.





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Player Health & Communication

- Parents are encouraged to notify staff if their child has asthma or any respiratory conditions.
- Coaches and staff will monitor players for symptoms such as coughing, difficulty breathing, or dizziness.
- Any decision to modify, cancel, or reschedule programming due to air quality will be communicated as early as possible via email, TeamSnap, and/or club social media.

CANCELLATIONS, RESCHEDULING, AND RESULTS

All competitive matches (excluding indoor and outdoor house leagues) follow the respective league's rules regarding cancellations, rescheduling, and results. Training sessions suspended or cancelled due to inclement weather will not be rescheduled.

For all house league matches:

Games cancelled before reaching the halfway mark will not be rescheduled, no result will be recorded, and the game will be excluded from the standings.

For games cancelled at or after the halfway mark, the official score at the time of suspension will be recorded as the final result.

In the case of inclement weather during a playoff tournament:

Games may be delayed or rescheduled to a later time within the tournament.

If rescheduling is not possible due to tight scheduling or limited field availability:

Any game suspended before reaching the halfway mark will be recorded as a 1–0 win for the team with the higher regular season ranking.

If a game has reached the halfway mark and the score is tied at the time of suspension, and rescheduling is not possible, the teams may proceed directly to a penalty shootout to determine the winner, at the discretion of the Club.

If a shootout cannot be conducted, the team with the higher regular season ranking will be considered the winner.





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Additional Information

Useful Links:

Link to City of Waterloo Field Status: <https://www.waterloo.ca/en/things-to-do/outdoor-field-conditions.aspx>

Link to Air Quality: <https://www.airqualityontario.com/aqhi/>

Link to Weather Network: <https://www.theweathernetwork.com/en/city/ca/ontario/waterloo/current>

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

General Info

Q: Who makes the final decision to cancel training or games?

A: For training sessions, head coaches (in consultation with Club staff) make the decision. For games, referees make the final call at the field, unless a field closure is announced by the City of Waterloo.

Q: Will I receive a notification if my session is canceled?

A: Yes. If your session is canceled due to inclement weather, you will receive a notification through your PowerUp account. Please ensure that your contact information is up to date and that notifications are enabled in your account settings.

Cancellations and updates will also be announced on our Club website and shared across our official social media platforms

Q: Will I get a refund if my session is canceled due to weather?

A: Training sessions canceled due to weather are not rescheduled or refunded, as stated in our club policies. Game cancellations follow league-specific rescheduling/refund rules.

Field Closures & Notifications

Q: What triggers a field closure?

A: Field closures are determined by the City of Waterloo for municipal fields or by the Club based on field safety and weather conditions.

Q: Are turf fields treated differently than grass fields?

A: Yes. Turf fields typically remain open in rain unless there is lightning or extreme heat. Grass fields are more vulnerable and may close to prevent damage.





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Q: How do I know if a specific field is open or closed?

A: You can check the [City of Waterloo Field Status page](#) or our Club's website. Teams will also be notified directly when possible.

Q: When will a decision be made?

A: Weather-related decisions are typically made **at least one hour before** the activity. In rapidly changing conditions, updates may come closer to start time.

Training & Games

Q: Can a coach cancel training even if fields are open?

A: Yes. Coaches may cancel training sessions at their discretion for safety reasons, even if fields remain officially open. However, teams are expected to train if the field is open and the City of Waterloo has not issued a closure.

Q: What happens if my game, practice, or camp day is canceled? Will it be rescheduled?

A: Competitive games may follow league rules for rescheduling. House league games and training sessions are generally **not rescheduled**.

Q: What happens if the weather changes suddenly during a session?

A: Coaches and referees will suspend activities immediately if conditions become unsafe, including lightning, extreme heat, or heavy rain.

Weather-Specific Protocols

Q: What is the lightning policy?

A: All activities must stop immediately if thunder or lightning is observed. Participants must seek shelter. Activities may only resume **30 minutes after** the last lightning flash or thunder sound.

Q: What are the heat safety rules?

A: Activities continue with extra precautions between 32–38°C, such as water breaks. Above 38°C, the Club may cancel activities based on City recommendations. Details are listed under our **Extreme Heat** section.

Q: What happens when air quality is rated "Poor"?

A: If the **Air Quality Index** is rated "Poor" by Environment Canada for the Region of Waterloo, activities may be canceled one hour prior for health and safety. [Air Quality Control](#)

Q: Can I train if the field is closed?

A: No

