



# Extreme Weather Guidelines

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## Introduction & Overview

These Extreme Weather Guidelines are intended to support consistent, safe, and practical decision-making in response to weather and environmental conditions that may affect outdoor activities conducted by or associated with Townsville Touch Football.

The guidelines are designed to provide a common framework for managing risk, while recognising that conditions may vary between venues, activities, and participants. They are not intended to replace reasonable judgement, but to assist authorised officials, clubs, and activity leaders to make timely and defensible decisions in the interest of safety.

In all cases, the safety of participants, officials, volunteers, and spectators remains the overriding consideration.

### 1. Purpose

Townsville Touch Football (TTF) is committed to providing a safe environment for all participants, officials, volunteers, and spectators involved in its activities.

These Extreme Weather Guidelines set out the principles and procedures used by TTF to manage risks associated with adverse or extreme weather conditions that may impact the safe conduct of outdoor activities. The primary objective of these guidelines is to minimise the risk of injury or harm arising from weather-related hazards.

Where TTF is the organising body, or is otherwise responsible for an activity, these guidelines form part of TTF's duty of care obligations.

### 2. Scope of Application

These guidelines apply to outdoor activities conducted, organised, or supported by Townsville Touch Football, including but not limited to:

- TTF-run competitions (senior and junior)
- Representative team activities, including training sessions, trials, camps, and matches
- Coaching, refereeing, and education activities conducted outdoors
- Events or activities where TTF is the responsible or controlling body

These guidelines are not primarily intended for indoor activities, as such activities are generally considered to be sheltered from weather-related hazards. However, where an indoor activity may still be impacted by extreme weather (for example, power failure, access restrictions, or structural risk), TTF may apply these guidelines to determine an appropriate course of action

#### 2.1 Clubs and Affiliated Activities

TTF-affiliated clubs may maintain their own extreme weather or risk management policies. Where a club does not have its own policy, or where a club activity is conducted with the endorsement, support, or involvement of TTF, these guidelines are strongly recommended as a common-sense framework for managing weather-related risks.

Nothing in these guidelines prevents a club from adopting more conservative measures where it considers them necessary.

### 3. Guiding Principles

In managing extreme weather situations, TTF will apply the following principles:

- Safety takes precedence over schedules, results, or convenience
- Decisions will be made conservatively where conditions are uncertain



- Advice will be taken from official sources, including the Bureau of Meteorology
- Weather conditions may change rapidly and will be continuously monitored
- When in doubt, activities will be suspended or cancelled

## 4. Authority and Decision-Making

The authority to suspend, delay, postpone, abandon, or cancel an activity due to extreme weather rests with:

1. The TTF President; or
2. The Competition Coordinator; or
3. An official delegated by the TTF Board; or
4. For representative or sanctioned activities, the relevant Tour Manager, Team Coach or Manager, or delegated TTF official.

For training sessions or non-competition activities conducted under TTF oversight, the supervising official or appointed activity leader is responsible for monitoring conditions and initiating safety procedures in accordance with these guidelines.

Decisions made in the interest of safety are final at the time they are made.

Where practicable, decisions made under these guidelines should be noted by the authorised official.

## 5. Extreme Weather Management Framework

TTF uses a three-level traffic light system to communicate and manage extreme weather conditions. The applicable level may change as conditions evolve.

<b>Level 1 - Green</b>	Conditions are safe for activities to proceed. Weather is being monitored, and no immediate impact is expected.
<b>Level 2 - Amber</b>	Conditions have the potential to impact safety. Activities may continue, however conditions are being closely monitored, and preparations are made to suspend or cancel activities if required.
<b>Level 3 - Red</b>	Conditions are unsafe. Activities are suspended, postponed, abandoned, or cancelled.

## 6. Weather Hazard Guidelines

The hazards outlined below are not exhaustive and are intended to provide guidance for the most encountered conditions within our geographic area.

### 6.1 Severe Wind or Cyclonic Conditions

Activities may be suspended or cancelled where strong or gusting winds create a foreseeable risk to safety, including but not limited to:

- Flying debris or unsecured equipment;
- Unstable temporary structures, signage, or shade shelters;
- Risk of falling branches or trees;
- Reduced ability to safely control play or officiate.

Activities will not proceed where official warnings or conditions indicate that outdoor activity presents an unacceptable safety risk.



In circumstances where a tropical cyclone or severe weather system is forecast to impact the Townsville region, TTF will also consider the lead-up period to such an event when making decisions about scheduled activities.

This may include consideration of official warnings, forecast timing, and the need for participants, officials, volunteers, and their families to undertake reasonable preparation activities in advance of anticipated cyclonic conditions.

Where appropriate, activities may be cancelled in advance to allow adequate time for preparation, even if immediate playing conditions are not yet unsafe.

## **6.2 Lightning and Thunderstorms**

Lightning presents a serious risk of injury or death to participants in outdoor environments.

TTF adopts the standardised “30/30 rule” for the management of electrical storms:

- If the time between seeing a lightning flash and hearing thunder is 30 seconds or less, the storm is considered to be within 10 kilometres.
- When this occurs, all outdoor activities must be suspended immediately.

Where available, two short blasts of a siren or equivalent audible warning should be used to signal suspension. Verbal instructions should be issued where possible.

All participants, officials, and spectators must seek appropriate shelter, such as:

- A substantial enclosed building; or
- A fully enclosed vehicle with windows closed.

Unsafe shelter includes, but is not limited to:

- Trees or groups of trees
- Open-sided shelters or tents
- Metal structures or equipment
- Isolated shade structures

Activities must not resume until:

- No lightning has been observed and no thunder heard for at least 30 minutes; and
- Conditions are assessed as safe by the authorised official.

Each occurrence of lightning or thunder resets the 30-minute clearance period.

## **6.3 Heavy or Persistent Rain**

Rainfall alone does not automatically result in the suspension or cancellation of activities, and decisions will be based on the impact of conditions on safety, rather than the presence of rain itself.

Activities may be suspended, delayed, or cancelled where:

- Visibility for participants or officials is significantly reduced
- Pooling or surface water creates unsafe footing
- Field conditions present an increased risk of injury
- Continued use of the playing surface may cause damage resulting in safety risks or unreasonable repair burden
- Access to or from the venue is unsafe due to flooding
- Standing or flowing water presents electrical, biological, or physical hazards

## **6.4 Extreme Heat/Humidity**

TTF will consider ambient temperature, humidity, and forecast conditions when managing extreme heat. In assessing extreme heat, TTF will consider temperature in combination with humidity, duration of activity, and participant workload.



As a general guide:

- **31–35°C:** Activities may be modified, including shorter playing intervals and additional drink breaks
- **36°C and above:** Outdoor activities will be suspended

TTF may apply more conservative thresholds based on conditions and participant welfare.

## 6.5 Power, Lighting Failure, or Inadequate Lighting

Where an activity requires artificial lighting, any complete loss of lighting due to power failure will result in the immediate suspension of the activity.

An activity may also be suspended, delayed, or cancelled where lighting is insufficient or inconsistent, even if power has not been completely lost.

In assessing lighting adequacy, the authorised official will consider whether:

- The ball can be clearly seen in flight and at ground level;
- Players can be clearly identified at all areas of the field;
- Field markings and boundaries are clearly visible;
- Match officials can safely and accurately perform their duties; and
- Lighting is reasonably consistent across the playing area and does not create hazardous dark zones.

Where lighting conditions are assessed as unsafe, play will not commence or will be suspended until lighting is restored to a safe and functional level.

## 6.6 Air Quality and Environmental Conditions

TTF recognises that poor air quality, including smoke haze, dust, or pollution, may pose health risks to participants, officials, and spectators.

Where air quality is a concern, TTF will have regard to the Air Quality Index (AQI) as published by relevant government authorities.

As a general guide:

- **AQI 0–66 (Very Good to Fair):** No changes or active monitoring required.
- **AQI 67–99 (Fair):** Outdoor activities may proceed as scheduled, with ongoing monitoring. Participants with asthma or respiratory conditions should be advised to take appropriate precautions, and monitoring will be increased.
- **AQI 100–149 (Very Poor):** Outdoor activities may proceed with caution. Asthmatics or symptomatic non-asthmatics should not compete or train outdoors. Minimise asymptomatic athlete exposure.
- **AQI 150–200 (Hazardous):** Outdoor activities may be modified, delayed, or suspended, particularly for junior competitions or prolonged activities.
- **AQI above 200:** Outdoor activities will be suspended or cancelled.

Reduced visibility that prevents participants or officials from safely seeing play, opponents, or hazards may result in suspension or cancellation of activities.

In all cases, authorised officials may apply more conservative measures where conditions, duration of activity, or participant welfare warrant it.

## 6.7 Other Hazardous Weather Conditions

Consideration may also be given to hazards arising after severe weather, including surface contamination, debris, or damage not immediately apparent.



Where weather conditions arise that are not specifically addressed in these guidelines, but which present a foreseeable risk to safety, TTF will assess the situation and determine appropriate action consistent with the principles outlined in this document.

## 7. Suspension, Resumption, and Cancellation

Where an activity is suspended temporarily:

- If the scheduled duration has expired, or less than five (5) minutes remain, the activity may be deemed concluded
- Where sufficient time remains, the activity may resume once all safety criteria are met
- Make-up time will not be permitted unless otherwise provided for under applicable competition rules

These guidelines do not determine competition outcomes, and the relevant Competition Rules will govern results and points allocation of affected matches.

## 8. Communication

TTF will communicate decisions regarding extreme weather through its approved communication channels, including official websites, social media platforms, and public address systems where available.

Participants, officials, and team representatives are requested not to contact TTF or clubs directly to confirm match or activity status and instead rely on official communications.

Where club representatives or individuals share TTF communications, they are encouraged to share original posts to ensure updates are visible if conditions change.

## 9. Review

These guidelines may be reviewed and updated from time to time to reflect best practice, regulatory guidance, or operational experience.



## Appendix A

# Extreme Weather Decision-Making Tools

## A1 – Lightning and Thunderstorm Decision Tool

Use a reliable lightning tracker to monitor storm activity, but remember that there may be some delay in the app or website displaying any nearby activity.

- My Lightning Tracker (mobile app): <https://www.jrustonapps.com/apps/my-lightning-tracker>
- Ergon Energy Website: <https://www.ergon.com.au/network/outages/lightning-tracker>

If lightning or thunder is observed or heard:

- Count the time between lightning and thunder
- If 30 seconds or less, immediately suspend all outdoor activities
- Direct participants and officials to safe shelter
- Restart the 30-minute clearance timer after each lightning/thunder event
- Do not resume until no lightning or thunder has occurred for at least 30 minutes
- Reassess conditions before resuming

**Safe shelter** includes:

- ✓ Enclosed buildings
- ✓ Fully enclosed vehicles

**Unsafe shelter** includes:

- ✗ Trees or open structures
- ✗ Tents, shelters, or shade sails
- ✗ Metal equipment or fencing

**If in doubt, suspend.**

## A2 – Field Lighting Adequacy Decision Tool

Use this checklist where artificial lighting is required.

Lighting may be considered unsafe if any of the following apply:

- The ball cannot be clearly seen in flight or on the ground
- Players cannot be clearly identified across all areas of the field
- Field markings or boundaries are difficult to see
- Referees cannot safely or confidently perform their duties
- Lighting is uneven, creating dark or hazardous zones
- Visibility deteriorates due to weather (rain, mist, glare)

If one or more of the above is present and cannot be promptly rectified, the activity should be suspended or not commenced.



## A3 – Air Quality Quick Reference

Check air quality using a government-published Air Quality Index (AQI) source.

- <https://apps.des.qld.gov.au/air-quality/>
- **North Ward:** <https://apps.des.qld.gov.au/air-quality/stations/?station=tnw>

Additionally, the Bureau of Meteorology supports/recommends the following sources:

- Air Pollution in Australia: Real-time Air Quality Index Visual Map
  - <https://aqicn.org/city/australia/queensland/north-ward/>
- Air Quality Australia
  - <https://air-quality.com/place/australia/townsville/b11e7b2b>

AQI Range	Guidance
0–66	Activities may proceed, active monitoring not required.
67–99	Activities may proceed, sensitive participants should be advised.
100–149	Proceed with caution; sensitive participants should not participate
150–200	Modify, delay, or suspend activities
201+	Suspend or cancel outdoor activities

Where an AQI reading is not available, smoke (in particular) can be assessed by the visibility of nearby landmarks using the following matrix:

I can see a landmark that is...	Air Health Category	Activity Level (people sensitive to smoke)	Activity Level (everyone else)
About 20km away	Good	Good to be outside	
About 10km away	Moderate	Okay, but watch for changes	
About 5km away	Poor	Reduce prolonged or heavy physical activity	Normal activity is okay, but be alert for changes
About 1.5km away	Very Poor	Avoid physical activity	Reduce prolonged or heavy physical activity
Less than 1.5km	Hazardous	Stay indoors	Avoid all physical activity outdoors.

When making an assessment, consider:

- Duration of activity
- Age of participants
- Number of matches or workload on officials
- Presence of smoke, haze, or odour

Officials may apply more conservative measures at any time.

## A4 – General Safety Override

At any time, if an authorised official reasonably believes that conditions present an unacceptable risk to safety – even if specific thresholds have not been met – they may suspend, delay, or cancel an activity.

Safety decisions made in good faith, using these guidelines and decision tools, are supported by Townsville Touch Football.