

Racing and Wagering Western Australia RACE DAY PROCEDURES 3.5

THUNDERSTORM AND LIGHTNING PROCEDURES

OBJECTIVE: Thunderstorm and lightning activity is a risk that can cause severe injury or death to people and animals participating in racing. Due to the unpredictability of electrical storms the following guidelines have been developed to minimise these risks to industry participants, officials and members of the public.

POLICY: The RWWA Stewards have adopted the following policy and safety procedures relating to the suspension and resumption of industry related activities in the event of a thunderstorm or lightning activity occurring in the vicinity. This policy can be applied to all Racing codes in addition to barrier/public trials and track work activities across Western Australia.

GUIDELINES

1. Prior to the commencement of racing or training activities the Stewards/track officials are to check for any current severe weather warnings and take appropriate action as deemed necessary on the day.
2. In the event of a severe weather warning it is important (where possible) to access up to date information from the Bureau of Meteorology website. This is available at the following internet address: www.bom.gov.au

The following link provides a basic understanding of how to interpret the weather radar imagery: http://www.bom.gov.au/australia/radar/about/radar_images_intro.shtml

This website provides updated weather warnings and the radar imagery section allows for tracking storm cell trajectory. The weather radar imagery cannot be relied upon exclusively to detect thunderstorm and lightning activity. It is important to note that the weather radar reflects off rainfall and ice within, and falling from clouds. It does not indicate the presence of lightning, as lightning can be produced where no rainfall is evident.

3. The Bureau of Meteorology (Information officer) can also be contacted for updated information and advice on (08) 9263 2222. Please note that this telephone service is only available on weekdays during standard business hours.

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4. The most practical technique (which should be used in conjunction with the other methods or alone if necessary) is to apply the 30/30 "Flash to Bang" rule. The 30/30 rule relates to the duration between the flash of lightning and clap of thunder. This rule is based on the fact that light travels faster than sound, and given that sound travels at a speed of around one (1) km every three (3) seconds, the time that elapses between the flash of lightning and associated clap of thunder can be divided by three (3) to give a measure of how far away the storm is in kilometres.

5. When weather warnings are in-place and/ or storm activity is detected a designated “Weather Watcher” will be appointed by the Steward/Track official in charge to monitor storm activity, record information from the Bureau of Meteorology website and document details when applying the 30/30 rule.
6. For the purpose of this policy when the “Flash to Bang” count approaches thirty (30) seconds the storm activity has breached the ten (10) km safety zone and further action must then be taken.

SUSPENSION OF ACTIVITY

1. When it has been determined that lightning and thunder is within the ten (10km) safety zone of the venue, racing activities will be suspended.
2. An oncourse announcement should be made to ensure all persons present at the racecourse seek shelter and arrangements made to secure horses/greyhounds in the stalls/kennels. Refer to the attached Race Day Emergency Announcement Script as required.
3. In the event of a race meeting being delayed as a result of the suspension of activity, the Stewards will immediately notify the TAB and Race Club Secretary/Manager of this decision. The Steward in Charge will liaise with the “Weather Watcher” and monitor the situation and keep the relevant parties informed of the developments.

RESUMPTION OF ACTIVITY

1. The second part of the 30/30 rule provides the criteria for the resumption of activity. As trailing storm clouds still carry a lingering charge, activity should not resume until thirty (30) minutes after the final recorded lightning and thunder activity within the ten (10km) safety range. It is important to emphasise that “blue skies and lack of rainfall” are not adequate reasons to resume activities early and the 30/30 rule must be followed.

RECORD OF DECISION MAKING PROCESS

In the event that an activity is suspended or delayed it is important to document the reasons for these decisions. The attached form should be completed outlining this process. Details around communications that occur on the day between the Stewards and key stakeholders including the race club manager, on-course medical personnel and industry participants should be recorded on the attached form.

Publish Date – June 2018

Endorsed by IAC at meeting on 24 July 2018

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THUNDERSTORM OR LIGHTNING ACTIVITY REPORT

Date	
Venue Name	
Racing Code	
Steward / Club Official in Charge	
Designated "Weather Watcher"	

[illegible]

Steward / Club Official Acknowledgement

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Race Meeting Emergency Situations - PA Announcements (Script)

In the event of an emergency situation occurring that requires information to be provided to members of the public, industry participants and other stakeholders the race caller is the best person to announce clear and concise messages via the PA system. Clear announcements help to keep crowds calm and under control so as to avoid a panic situation which can place large numbers of people at risk of serious injury or even death. The race caller should seek to provide clear messages that describe how people should respond to an emergency situation, the safest way to leave the area (when required) and where the muster point is located which can vary depending on the emergency situation. Racecourses should have dedicated muster points which are clearly sign posted and indicated on evacuation maps that are displayed throughout the racecourse. Its also important that race club staff and volunteers are made aware of the established evacuation process and who is responsible for assuming the Chief Evacuation Warden and Area Warden roles and what actions they should take in the event of an emergency.

Announcement for Pre-Evacuation Phase

"Ladies and gentlemen, your attention please. A potential emergency has arisen at the racecourse and we are investigating to confirm the situation and what further actions are required. Please remain calm and await further instructions to be announced via the PA system or from the evacuation wardens in your area. Thank you" (Announce twice)

Announcement for False Alarm

"Ladies and gentlemen, your attention please. Club officials have investigated and determined that the emergency situation was a false alarm and racing can resume at the discretion of the stewards. We appreciate your patience and hope you enjoy the remaining races. Thank you" (Announce twice)

Announcement for Evacuation (Fire, Gas Leak, Structural Collapse)

"Ladies and gentlemen, your attention please. Club officials have investigated and have confirmed that an emergency situation exists and we require everyone to calmly evacuate to the nearest muster point. Evacuation wardens are positioned at strategic points to provide further information and direction to the nearest muster point. Please follow instructions provided to you by the evacuation team and if assistance is required please notify your nearest warden as soon as possible. Thank you" (Announce twice)

Announcement for Inclement Weather - Thunderstorms/ Lightning)

"Ladies and gentlemen, your attention please. Due to inclement weather conditions including lightning strikes in the area we require everyone to calmly move indoors or inside vehicles as quickly as possible. The stewards have postponed racing until the storm cell passes well beyond the racecourse and we will provide further announcements as the situation develops. We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause and we appreciate your patience. Thank you." (Announce twice)

Announcement for When Evacuation is Not Required

"Ladies and gentlemen, your attention please. Club officials have responded accordingly bringing the emergency situation under control and as a result an evacuation is not required. We appreciate your patience and apologise for any inconvenience this situation may have caused. Thank you." (Announce twice)

Announcing the 'All Clear' and Return to Racing

"Ladies and gentlemen, your attention please. Emergency services personnel and club officials have brought the emergency situation under control and it is now safe to return to normal operations and for racing to resume. We thank you for your cooperation during the evacuation exercise and we apologise for any inconvenience this may have caused." (Announce twice)

Announcing the 'All Clear' and the Abandonment of Racing

"Ladies and gentlemen, your attention please. Emergency services personnel and club officials have brought the emergency situation under control however it has been deemed by the stewards that it is too unsafe to continue racing and the remaining race(s) will be abandoned. We apologise for this development and any inconvenience this may cause and hope you can return for our next race meeting. Thank you" (Announce twice)

Please note – RWWA Stewards, club officials and staff and the race caller have the discretion to change the wording of announcements to suit the specific situation on the day. Each situation may require a slightly different announcement so the race caller should not make any announcements without first consulting with the Stewards and race club manager / secretary.