



## **Georgetown Soccer Association** **Field Safety Policies**

### **Parent Seating Area During Team Practices:**

Parents and families are not permitted to be in the team practice areas. Only players and coaches should be on the practice areas. Parents who sit along the fence lines should be within 10 feet of the fences. Parents sitting along Annie Purl fence line must walk around the sides of the complex to get there, not through the middle of practice fields. This is for the safety of both the players practicing and the parents and families observing.

If you are a coach of a rec team and you have a child playing on another team, we ask that you also abide by this policy as well when not coaching your team. Please sit and observe practices from the designated areas by the west walk-in-gate (by the dumpster) or by the pavilion/concession stand.

If you would like to walk or run around the complex during your player's practice, you may do this along the fence and tree line. Please keep non-practicing children brought to practices under your supervision at all times and do not allow them to bring rocks from the driveway area into the grass sitting area as this is dangerous to our field maintenance crew and equipment. Please do not let your children play on any of the equipment or goals.

### **Player Drop Off For Practices:**

If bad weather or lightning is in the forecast, we ask that parents do not drop their kids off for practice AND LEAVE the facility. Please stay in the case of a possible practice delay or field closure due to weather.

### **Bad Weather Cancellations:**

In the event of bad weather, the fields will remain open unless the soccer fields become unplayable due to a dangerous playing surface or high winds. A dangerous playing surface is based on the amount of rainfall received within a short period of time. This will be determined by 3 pm. In the event that the fields are open and practices have begun, the coaching staff on site will decide if practices need to be delayed or cancelled based on real time conditions.

Cold Weather: All activities at the GSA Fields will be cancelled if the air temperature is 35 degrees or lower OR the temperature with wind chill (the effective temperature) is 35 degrees or lower.



**Hot Weather:** All activities at the GSA Fields will be cancelled if the air temperature is 103 degrees or higher OR the temperature with heat index (the effective temperature) is 95 degrees or higher.

**Bad Weather Cancellation Notification:**

GSA will always attempt to be proactive in cancellations of practice or games due to bad weather. In the case of bad weather cancellations, you should check our website for field status. We also encourage parents to sign up for Rainout.com from our homepage to receive field status text messages. We \*may not\* always send email blasts about practice cancellations.

**GSA Lightning Policy:**

In the event of lightning, GSA operates on 20/30 rule. This means if a lightning strike occurs within 20 miles of the soccer fields, then fields are cleared for a minimum of 30 minutes. This is determined using our handheld lightning monitor.

**GSA Lightning Procedures:**

In the event of the soccer fields being cleared of teams due to lightning within 20 miles, it is vital that players, parents, coaches and volunteers get into their cars immediately. If the delay is extended to 45 minutes into the practice session, then that practice will be cancelled. For example, if practice begins at 6:00 PM and the last lightning strike occurred at 6:05 PM, then the earliest the players could return to the fields would be 6:50 PM. In this example, practice would be cancelled for the 6:00-7:30PM session. Remember to never stand in parking lots, under trees, under the pavilion, or anywhere near water during a lightning delay. Please get into your vehicles with the windows rolled up.



## **GSA Lightning Safety & Designated Weather Watcher**

All individuals participating in or observing an outdoor soccer event at the GSA Ray Thomas Soccer Fields are responsible for their own safety and should monitor threatening weather conditions. Before each practice, warm-up, or game, the club has appointed individuals as the designated “weather watcher.” If the coach is the only club official at the event, then the home coach is responsible for the duties of “weather watcher.” The weather watcher will make the decision to stop play, remove individuals from the field, and announce a warning to the spectators.

The designated weather watcher should be aware of weather conditions at all times, including observing the conditions and keeping abreast of the weather forecast. As a means of monitoring local weather, the designated weather watcher can consult the National Weather Service for current information. All storm warning and storm watches should be heeded. When the weather becomes dangerous, the designated weather watcher will announce that all play activities are suspended and all individuals, both players and spectators, should seek appropriate shelter.

No place is absolutely safe from lightning threat; however, some places are safer than others. Large, enclosed structures (substantially constructed buildings) tend to be safer than smaller structures or open structures. In general, a fully enclosed vehicle with the windows rolled up tends to be safer than being outside so long as contact with metal surfaces inside and outside the vehicle is avoided. The following areas are not appropriate shelter and should be avoided: Any area of higher elevation; wide-open areas such as sports fields, tall isolated objects such as flag poles, light poles, or trees; metal fences and metal bleachers, unprotected open buildings like dugouts, picnic pavilions, rain shelters and bus stops.

When determining whether or not to suspend play, the designated weather watcher should use his/her common sense and good judgment and or the Club provided lightning detector. If a thunderstorm appears imminent before or during an activity or contest (regardless of whether lightning is seen or thunder heard), postpone or suspend the activity until the hazard has passed. Signs of imminent thunderstorm activity are darkening clouds, high winds and thunder or lightning. Even storms that are many miles away can pose a lightning danger. This may mean the appropriate decision is to suspend activities even before the first sight of lightning or sound of thunder.



If the Lighting detector reads lightning within 20 miles of the GSA Ray Thomas complex all games/practice/events will be suspended.

All individuals should have the right to leave an athletic site or activity, without fear of repercussion or penalty, in order to seek a safer structure or location if they feel they are in danger from impending lightning activity. Safety is the number one consideration, the activity can be made up later.

If activity has been suspended due to lightning, the designated weather watcher should wait at least 30 minutes before resuming activity. Each time additional lightning is detected, the minimum 30-minute waiting period should be reset. A clear sky or lack of rainfall are not adequate indicators for resuming play. The minimum 30-minute return-to-play waiting period should not be shortened. Play should not be resumed even after the 30 minute waiting period if any signs of thunderstorm activity remain in the area or if the weather forecast indicates the threat is not over.

***NO LIGHTNING SAFETY GUIDELINES CAN GUARANTEE ABSOLUTE SAFETY. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EVERY PLAYER AND PARENT TO BE AWARE OF WEATHER CONDITIONS AND TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION TO BE SAFE. USE COMMON SENSE AND GOOD JUDGEMENT. PLAN AHEAD AND MAKE SAFETY YOUR NUMBER ONE PRIORITY.***