

# **Dragon Boats NSW Inc.**

(Incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act, 1984)  
(Registered Number: Y2086230)  
(ABN 31 936 733 882)



## **Lightning Policy for regatta and water training**

**DBNSW Official Lightning policy, all DBNSW members are expected to follow these guidelines.**

*DBNSW would like to acknowledge and thank Sports Medicine Australia and other sporting associations for assisting information.*

### **Introduction:**

The AS1768-2007 Lightning Protection Standard was published on 10 January 2007. Section 1.2 states that "Compliance with the recommendations contained in this Standard will not necessarily prevent damage or personal injury due to lightning, but will reduce the probability of such damage or injury occurring".

3.3.1 Under Precautions and Personal Safety notes "In the absence of specific information from weather radar, a lightning location system, or a specialized warning device" then "the 30/30 safety guideline should be used."

### **Procedures:**

When lightning is considered a possible or actual threat the following procedures are applicable:

#### **(a) Access to Bureau of Meteorology (BOM)**

(i) Lead up prior to the regatta

The proactive plan should commence in the days before the activity, where weather forecast provide important warning of possible thunderstorm activity.

[http://www.bom.gov.au/info/thermal\\_stress](http://www.bom.gov.au/info/thermal_stress)

- Dragon Boats NSW Inc administration will monitor weather forecasts on a daily basis using the Bureau of Meteorology website ([www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au)). Warnings will be posted on the DBNSW website ([www.dbnsw.org.au](http://www.dbnsw.org.au))

#### **(ii) Regatta Days**

- On regatta day if any threat of lightning is predicted the Chief Official (or event organisers) will have the latest update information to provide the team managers at briefing.
- Increased awareness of lightning risk should continue during the regatta until the activity has finished.
- If the threat continues throughout the regatta; the Chief Official will discuss the situation with other relevant officials and team managers.
- Team Managers will need to ensure they brief all their paddlers on the weather situation and will be required to follow instructions.

- If lightning is predicted within 10km of the regatta venue , the start time of the regatta will be postponed until the threat has passed.
- If lightning threats happens during the regatta, the races will be held up until the threat has passed.
- This decision to delay or suspend races as well as resume races will be based on information obtained from the BOM.

### (iii) Training Sessions

- It is the responsibility of the club, to check weather forecasts prior to each training session and inform their members whether training will be on, based on weather predictions.
- Once at training, it is the clubs responsibility to observe any change in weather patterns prior to commencement of the session. If lightning is observed on the horizon or in the distance, do not go out and wait until the storm has passed.
- If you are on water, and a storm hits very quickly or you can see lightning coming in, then head to shore (most direct route) as quickly as possible. It is more important to ensure the safety of your crew than finish a training set.

### (b) No access to Bureau of Meteorology (30 / 30 Rule)

The most basic level of warning involves observation of the weather in the local area. It is important to remember that lightning may be obscured by clouds so it must be assumed that when thunder is heard, lightning is in the vicinity. In such cases, careful judgment must be used to determine whether a threat exists.

The first part of the “30/30” rule is a guide to the *postponement* or *suspension* of activities. Most experts agree that the accepted ‘safe’ distance from lightning is more than 10km. This means that as the time interval between observing the flash and hearing the thunder approaches 30 seconds, all those in exposed areas should be seeking or already inside safe shelters. A storm cell with lightning activity within 10km constitutes a threat.

The second part of the 30/30 rule provides the criteria for the *resumption* of activity which is applicable to decisions made with BOM access as well. Here, it is recommended that people wait a minimum of 30 minutes after the last sighting of lightning or sound of thunder. This figure is based on the observation that the typical storm moves at about 40km/h. Thus, waiting 30 minutes allows the thunderstorm to be about 20km away, minimising the likelihood of a nearby lightning strike. Note: 60 minutes is the maximum delay time.

The “**30/30**” rule is recommended for lightning safety and serves as a guide for the suspension and subsequent resumption of activities. The overall principle is to seek shelter when the lightning activity is too close.

The observation of approaching storm clouds, the first flash of lightning or clap of thunder, no matter how far away should heighten lightning awareness. The level of risk depends on one's location (direction and distance) relative to the storm cell and the direction in which the storm system is travelling.

A simple method of determining the distance to the storm cell is to measure the time elapsed from when the lightning flash is observed and when the associated clap of thunder is heard.

Light travels faster than sound. Assuming that the light from the flash reaches the observer instantaneously, and knowing that sound takes approximately three (3) seconds to travel one (1) kilometre, the distance can be determined by using the following rule:

Distance (in Km) = Time from observing the flash to hearing thunder (in seconds) 3

It is important to remember that lightning may be obscured by clouds so it must be assumed that when the thunder is heard, lightning is in the vicinity. In such cases, careful judgment must be used to determine whether a threat exists.

It is important to emphasize that blue skies and lack of rainfall are not adequate reasons to breach the 30-minute minimum return-to-activity rule.