**MRC Baseball/Softball Weather Policy**

*Ensuring Player Safety & Fair Play in All Conditions*

**Understanding the Heat Index**

The **heat index** is a measure of how hot it feels when relative humidity is factored in with the actual air temperature. It provides a **real-feel temperature** that accounts for the body's ability to cool itself through sweat evaporation.

**How the Heat Index is Calculated**

The National Weather Service determines the heat index by combining air temperature and humidity. Higher humidity reduces the body's ability to evaporate sweat, making it feel hotter than the actual air temperature. The heat index will be determined **10 minutes prior to the start of a game** to establish appropriate safety measures.

**Heat Index Safety Guidelines**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Heat Index Zone** | **Temperature & Humidity Range** | **Policy** |
| **White Zone** | 65-80°F | No special measures required. |
| **Yellow Zone** | 81-98°F | Coaches must ensure hydration and encourage frequent substitutions. |
| **Orange Zone** | 99-105°F | Yellow Zone measures apply. Catchers may only play **two consecutive innings**. |
| **Red Zone** | 106-115°F | Yellow & Orange Zone measures apply. Game lengths are modified as follows: **T-ball:** All games canceled. **Coach Pitch:** Games shortened by **15 minutes**. **4th-5th grade baseball, 4th-6th grade softball, and 6th-7th grade baseball:** Games shortened by **20 minutes**. |
| **Black Zone** | Above 115°F | All games and practices are canceled. |

**Additional Heat Index Policies**

* **Game Completion:** Once a game starts, it will finish under the conditions in place at game time, even if the heat index decreases.
* **Practice Adjustments:** Coaches must modify practices based on the heat index, ensure frequent water breaks, and allow time for cooling down.
* **Dynamic Changes:** The heat index may fluctuate throughout the day, so adjustments will be made accordingly, especially on weekends.

**Rainout & Game Cancellation Policies**

* The **Sports Director or designated staff** will determine rainouts or game stoppages due to **inclement weather.**
* **Minimum innings required for a complete game:**
	+ **T-Ball to 4th/5th grade:** 3 innings (or 2.5 if the home team is ahead).
	+ **6th/7th grade and above:** 4 innings (or 3.5 if the home team is ahead).
* If a game is called early, the **score will revert to the last completed inning**.
* The league will **reschedule incomplete games** and notify coaches of the new field, date, and time.

**MRC Severe Weather & Lightning Safety Procedure**

*Ensuring Player, Coach, and Spectator Safety During Inclement Weather*

**Purpose**

Maize Recreation has developed a **severe weather and lightning safety procedure** to minimize the risk of injury from lightning strikes and other severe weather conditions for **players, coaches, officials, staff, and spectators**. This policy outlines the steps taken to **monitor weather conditions, suspend or cancel games, and ensure safe evacuation procedures.**

**Weather Monitoring**

In the case of inclement weather or lightning, Maize Recreation will utilize **various weather detection devices and sources** along with **local weather broadcasts** to assess conditions.

* **Lightning detection devices and the Flash-to-Bang method** will be used by **League Officials (Umpires and Field Supervisors)** to determine when games should be suspended or canceled.
* If a **Severe Weather Warning** is issued for **Sedgwick County,** Maize Recreation may **delay, suspend, or cancel** games as necessary for the safety of all participants.
* Notifications will be sent via **GroupMe** to coaches or direct communication will be made at the field when necessary.

**Game Day Severe Weather Procedures**

**Pre-Game Weather Evaluation**

If severe weather is a possibility before games begin, the **Field Supervisor and/or Umpire** will meet with both coaches to explain:

* How weather conditions will be monitored.
* What determines game stoppage due to severe weather or lightning.
* Who makes the final decision to suspend or cancel play (**Field Supervisor and/or Umpires**).

**Lightning Safety & Game Suspension**

* **Suspension of Play:** If **two confirmed lightning strikes** occur **within a 10-mile radius**, the Field Supervisor will sound **one (1) short horn blast** to signal that all games are **suspended for 30 minutes**.
* **Flash-to-Bang Method Alternative:**
	+ Count the seconds from a lightning flash to the sound of thunder.
	+ Divide by **5** to estimate the lightning strike distance in miles.
	+ If within **10 miles** (**50-second count or less**), a **one (1) short horn blast** will signal a **30-minute suspension** of play.
* All players, coaches, officials, and spectators **must immediately leave the field, dugout, and bleacher areas** and remain at the complex in a safe location.

**Resumption of Play**

* After the **30-minute suspension**, if no further lightning is detected within the 10-mile range, the Field Supervisor will sound **two (2) short horn blasts** to signal that play may resume.
* The **Flash-to-Bang method** may be used to confirm safe conditions before resuming play.

**Game Cancellation & Evacuation**

* If severe weather continues and conditions remain unsafe, the Field Supervisor may **cancel games instead of continuing suspensions**.
* In the event of **imminent severe weather**, the Field Supervisor will sound **four (4) short horn blasts**, signaling:
	+ Immediate evacuation of all athletes, coaches, fans, officials, and staff.
	+ Seeking the nearest **enclosed grounded shelter** or **secure indoor structure**.

**Important Safety Considerations**

* **Field Supervisors and Umpires have full authority** to suspend or cancel games based on the above criteria.
* Games will **not resume** unless the weather conditions meet the **minimum safety requirements** outlined in this policy.
* **No weather policy can guarantee 100% safety**, but following these guidelines **minimizes risk and enhances safety** for all participants.