

Game Suspension Policies

INCLEMENT WEATHER

I. On threatening days, game management should consult with contest officials about steps to be followed if conditions worsen.

II. When suspending an outdoor contest, officials and game management shall follow these policies.

A. When lightning is observed or thunder is heard, the contest must be suspended. The occurrence of lightning or thunder is not subject to interpretation or discussion — lightning is lightning; thunder is thunder.

B. Severe weather in the form of rain or snow may make the field unplayable.

III. When a contest is suspended, the home school administration shall attempt to arrange for the security of all participants.

A. Contestants and support personnel shall be moved to appropriate indoor facilities.

B. When lightning is observed or thunder is heard and the contest is suspended, contestants shall not return to the playing field until lightning has been absent from the local sky and thunder has not been heard for 30 minutes.

C. Spectators shall be advised of the action being taken to seek shelter. (Some hosts may be able to offer shelter to spectators but are not required to do so.)

IV. In considering resumption of competition, the following steps shall be followed.

A. Delays for contests scheduled **prior to 3 p.m.** must not exceed three hours. Delays for contests scheduled for **3 p.m. or later** must not exceed one and one half hour. **Delays on nights not followed by school for all the competing teams may be longer by mutual agreement of participating schools.** A postponed contest shall be rescheduled on a date/time mutually agreed to by the schools involved.

B. A decision to resume the contest within the time frame must be made by the officials who shall consult the home team administration and visiting school administration present at the contest.

C. The home school is responsible for facilities and will be given priority consideration in the final decision if there is not consensus among the three parties.

D. The final decision shall consider liability and conditions of facilities as well as future schedules, need to play the contest and finally the quality of all other options.

NOTE: MHSAA tournament policies for MHSAA tournament contests, or more restrictive local policies for regular-season contests would supersede these policies and should be shared with the opponents and officials prior to the contest, preferably in writing.

Otherwise, and to the extent allowed by the playing rules code, the official(s) shall make the final decision regarding game suspension once the game begins.

REGULAR-SEASON CONTEST DELAYS

When a league or conference does not have a written policy regarding late contest start time, the following MHSAA policy shall apply:

1. If a team fails to arrive for a regular-season contest at the time stated on the contract, it shall be necessary for the host administration to delay the contest, declare the game forfeited, reschedule the contest, or declare the event “no contest.”
2. If the host management has been notified of the reason for the delay and projected arrival, the officials must stand by for 60 minutes beyond the scheduled starting time. When the team arrives, a reasonable amount of time must be provided for the visiting team to conduct a pregame warm-up. In any case, warm-up shall not be less than 15 minutes.
3. If the host management has not been notified that there is a delay and the reason for it, the officials have permission to leave the site, without obligation, 30 minutes after the contracted start time has passed.

(In MHSAA tournament play, the Participating School Tournament Information for each sport will prescribe the specific action to be taken. For regular-season play, league and conference policy supercedes the policy above, so coaches and officials should inquire with their league to see if any policy exists.)