

SLSQ Procedure

Subject: Lightning Procedure	Department: Lifesaving
Procedure No: LSP 001	Version No: 3
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Purpose

This procedure stands to ensure all members, lifeguards and staff understand the potential hazards associated with lightning and what actions to undertake. This procedure falls in line with the Surf Life Saving Australia Environmental Factors Guideline, which can be found in the [SLSQ APP](#).

Scope

Surf Lifesaving Queensland Members, Clubs, Lifeguards and Staff.

Definitions

What is lightning and thunder?

Lightning is the discharge produced when differences between ground and atmospheric electrical charge are large enough (several hundred million volts) to overcome the insulating effects of air. Lightning strikes can occur within the cloud, between clouds or between clouds and the ground. An average thunderstorm can release several hundred megawatts of electrical power.

Thunder is the sound produced by the explosive action of air heated by the lightning strike to temperatures as high as 20,000 degrees Celsius.

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Background

This lightning procedure updates the previous Lightning Guideline 2.2 contained in the SLSQ App and Operations Manuals and is to be read in conjunction with the SLSA Environmental Factors Guideline 2018.

Procedure

Protection Against Lightning Strikes

Outdoor Protection

The 30/30 Rule

The 30/30 Rule is recommended for lightning safety in the Australian Standard on Lightning Protection. The rule is designed to provide guidance on the suspension and resumption of activities in an outdoor environment.

It sets out the following principals:

- Close Beach: Where the flash to bang count is 30 seconds, indicating that the lightning is 10km away. This is associated with significant risk that the strike could be at the patrol arena.
- Open Beach: Where 30 minutes has passed since the last sighting of lightning. A typical storm travels at about 40 km/h. Waiting 30 minutes allows the thunderstorm to be approximately 20km away.
- i) With an approaching thunderstorm, and where the 30/30 Rule applies, all persons should be advised to leave the water and clear the beach immediately. The Patrol Captain should remove the patrol flags, close the beach and then the patrol should retire to the shelter of the clubhouse, maintaining a surveillance lookout from there.
- ii) Seek shelter in a 'hard top' vehicle or building - avoid small structures, patrol shelters, fabric tents and isolated or small groups of trees.
- iii) If in the open, away from shelter, crouch down (singly), preferably in a hollow, with feet together and remove metal objects from head and body. Do not lie down but avoid being the highest object in the vicinity.
- iv) If swimming, surfing or in a boat leave the water immediately and seek shelter in one of the above examples.
- v) In the event of a surf carnival or special event, all effort should be made to ensure the safety of all personnel. All effort should be made by the carnival referee and/or organisers to delay the event until the danger has passed or cancel/postpone events completely.
- vi) Avoid the use of portable radios and mobile telephones during a thunderstorm. If an emergency call comes through, you are required keep them brief.

Indoor Protection

- i) Avoid the use of telephones, radios, fax machines, computers and other electrical equipment. If emergency calls are required keep them brief.
- ii) Before the storm arrives disconnect external aerials and power leads to radios and other appliances.

FIRST AID

The normal emergency care procedures apply to any patients effected by lightning strikes. Ensure that the rescuer is in no danger of being struck by lightning. If the patient is not breathing commence resuscitation immediately.

Related procedure instruments

Lightning Web Sites:

National Severe Storms Laboratory NSSL NOAA

[Severe Weather 101: Lightning Basics \(noaa.gov\)](https://www.noaa.gov/severe-weather-101/lightning-basics)

[Lightning Safety | National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration \(noaa.gov\)](https://www.noaa.gov/lightning-safety)

SLSA Environmental Factors Guideline 2018 Pages 13 and 14 – [SLSQ Club Management \(entegyapp.com.au\)](https://entegyapp.com.au)