



## **What do organisers do at a Pony Club event if thunderstorms are in the weather forecast?**

If thunderstorms are expected, organisers take clear steps to protect people and horses:

### **Bad Weather Plan – Pony Club Organised Events (Thunderstorms)**

#### **Purpose:**

To ensure the safety of all horses, riders, volunteers, and spectators in the event of thunderstorms or other dangerous weather.

### **1. Before the Event**

- Check weather forecasts regularly in the days leading up to the event.
- It is sensible to appoint a volunteer to regularly check the forecast to monitor conditions on the day.
- Make sure all volunteers and stewards know what to do if the plan is activated.
- Inform competitors at registration or in advance (e.g. in Pony Club Results)

### **2. Monitoring Weather**

- Use reliable sources (e.g. [Weather and climate change - Met Office](#) or [Real Time Lightning Map :: LightningMaps.org](#))
- Watch for:
  - Thunder or lightning within 10 miles (16 km)
  - Sudden changes in wind or heavy rain
- **Use the “30/30 Rule”:**  
**If thunder follows lightning in less than 30 seconds, it’s too close.**  
**Suspend activity for at least 30 minutes after the last lightning.**
- If thunder is rumbling in the distance, have someone monitor it closely, if you are happy, continue until the 30 second rule applies.

### **3. If Thunderstorms are too close**

**Announce a delay or suspension** of competition via loudspeakers and stewards.

- **Stop all activity in arenas and warm-up rings immediately.**
- Ask competitors to:
  - **Return horses to stables** if available
  - OR **load horses back onto lorries/trailers** for safety (the tyres on the vehicles will earth everyone in them)
- Instruct people to **shelter in solid buildings or vehicles** (not under trees or tents).
- Keep away from metal objects, fences, and open fields.

#### 4. Communication

- Use:
  - PA system
  - Text or WhatsApp group (if pre-arranged)
  - Officials/stewards to spread the message
  - Pony Club Results
- Keep everyone updated every 15–30 minutes.

#### 5. After the Storm

- Wait at least **30 minutes after last thunder/lightning** before resuming activity.
- **Check arena and field conditions** for safety (e.g. wet, slippery ground).
- **Decide whether to resume, reschedule, or cancel** – communicate clearly.

#### 6. Serious Incident Management (SIM) Plan and Emergency Contacts

Make sure a SIM plan is completed for the event, which includes all contact details for organisers, medical providers, vets, local fire brigades, local A&E departments.

[Management-of-Serious-Incident](#)

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact The Pony Club Safety Team at [safety@pcuk.org](mailto:safety@pcuk.org).