
WHEN TO CANCEL AN EVENT DUE TO WEATHER

As Scouters, we pride ourselves on teaching resilience, and with a motto of Be Prepared, it's tempting to plan to forge ahead with our plans no matter the weather. Sometimes, though, hazardous conditions may make an activity or outing too dangerous to proceed.

In this **BSA Safety Moment**, we will review when to cancel or postpone an event due to weather. Though disappointing, when the risk factors are just too great, we must use good judgment and common sense to prioritize personal safety over a planned adventure and the hard work that went into preparing for it.

Considerations

Preparation for hazardous weather starts before an event is even planned. The *Guide to Safe Scouting* states that “the risks of many outdoor activities vary substantially with weather conditions. Potential weather hazards and the appropriate responses should be understood and anticipated.” The first step, then, is training. At least one adult per outing should be current on their Hazardous Weather Training, available to youth and adults through the BSA Learn Center at my.scouting.org and good for two years.

BSA guidance is to know the weather forecast before you set out and check it again upon arrival and throughout the event. Determining when to cancel or postpone can still be a tough call, though, with many additional factors to consider. These include:

- location and terrain
- activities planned
- suitability of gear, clothing, supplies, and equipment
- availability of shelter
- age, experience, skill, and preparation level of the group
- level of weather, first aid, and survival training present in the group
- distance from help
- typical weather patterns and temperatures for the area and time of year
- dangerous conditions caused by a recent weather event
- ability to knowledgeably monitor changing conditions
- ability to adjust plans based on conditions
- having an emergency weather plan that the group understands

Go or No Go: Make a Decision

The best thing we can model as Scouters is how to consider all the factors and make an informed and prudent decision about whether to conduct an outing or to cancel or postpone until safer conditions prevail. Though Scouts may be disappointed at the time, they will learn from this approach and be one step closer to becoming the resilient young people we aim to develop.

Resources

- BSA's free online Hazardous Weather Training, available through the BSA Learn Center at my.scouting.org. At least one adult per outing should have taken this training within the previous two years.
- The *Guide to Safe Scouting's* [The Sweet 16 of BSA Safety](#).
- Find severe weather safety tips at the BSA's [weather-related safety moments](#) page.
- The *Scouts BSA Handbook* reviews the basics of how to read the signs of weather and how to recognize and respond to hazardous weather situations (see pages 216–218).
- National Weather Service (www.weather.gov) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (www.NOAA.gov) websites.