



**TRNT BOARD POLICY NO: 020**

**Date Introduced: 21 January 2010**

**Date Varied: 31 January 2011**

**Date Varied: 27 October 2016**

## **THUNDERSTORM AND LIGHTNING PROCEDURES DURING THOROUGHBRED RACING AND TRAINING**

**OBJECTIVE:** Thunderstorm and lightning activity is a risk that can cause severe injury or death to people and animals participating in racing and training. Due to the unpredictability of electrical storms the following guidelines have been developed to minimise these risks.

**POLICY:** The TRNT Stewards have adopted the following policy and safety procedures relating to the suspension and resumption of industry related activities. This policy is to be applied to all race meetings, barrier trials and trackwork.

### **GUIDELINES**

1. Stewards/track officials are to check for any current severe weather warnings on the day of racing activity.
2. In the event of a severe weather warning it is important (where possible) to access up to date information from the Weather Bureau website. This is available at the following internet address:

[www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au)

The following link provides a basic understanding of how to interpret the weather radar imagery:

[http://www.bom.gov.au/weather/radar/about/radar\\_images\\_intro.shtml](http://www.bom.gov.au/weather/radar/about/radar_images_intro.shtml)

This website provides updated weather warnings and the radar imagery section allows for tracking storm cell trajectory. The weather radar imagery cannot be relied upon exclusively to detect thunderstorm and lightning activity. It is important to note that the weather radar reflects off rainfall and ice within, and falling from clouds. It does not indicate the presence of lightning, as lightning can be produced where no rainfall is evident.

3. The Stewards and Track Supervisor also use a “Thunderbolt Lightningman” hand held lightning detector. This unit can track lightning and storm cell activity and provides the user with message alerts. It can provide details on the location of this activity and estimated time of arrival at the venue. The unit must be set up and tested upon arrival at

the venue. This is imperative for accurate detection and monitoring of any storm activity from the moment it enters the unit's range. The unit will not accurately detect storm activity if it is only turned on when the impending storm is imminent.

4. The other most practical technique (which should be used in conjunction with the other methods or alone if necessary) is to apply the 30/15 "Flash to Bang" rule. The 30/15 rule relates to the duration between the flash of lightning and clap of thunder. This rule is based on the fact that light travels faster than sound, and given that sound travels at a speed of around one (1) km every three (3) seconds, the time that elapses between the flash of lightning and associated clap of thunder can be divided by three (3) to give a measure of how far away the storm is in kilometres.
5. When weather warnings begin and storm activity is detected a designated "Weather Watcher" will be appointed by the Steward/Track official in charge to monitor storm activity, record information from the Weather Bureau or the "Thunderbolt Lightningman" unit and document details when applying the 30/15 rule.
6. For the purpose of this policy when the "Flash to Bang" count approaches thirty (30) seconds the storm activity has breached the ten (10) km safety zone.

## **SUSPENSION OF ACTIVITY**

1. When it has been determined that lightning and thunder is within the ten (10km) safety zone of the venue, racing activities will be suspended.
2. On race day an oncourse announcement should be made to ensure all participants at the venue seek shelter and arrangements made to secure horses in the stalls.
3. In the event of a race meeting being delayed as a result of the suspension of activity, the Stewards will immediately notify the TAB and Race Club Secretary/Manager of this decision. The Steward in Charge will liaise with the "Weather Watcher" and monitor the situation and keep the relevant parties informed of the developments.
4. In the event of trackwork, training activities will be suspended in accordance with the "Track Regulations".

## **RESUMPTION OF ACTIVITY**

1. The second part of the 30/15 rule provides the criteria for the resumption of activity. As trailing storm clouds still carry a lingering charge, activity should not resume until fifteen (15) minutes after the final recorded lightning and thunder activity within the ten (10km) safety range. It is important to emphasise that "blue skies and lack of rainfall" are not adequate reasons to resume activities early.

## **RECORD OF DECISION MAKING PROCESS**

In the event that activity is suspended or delayed it is important to document the reasons for these decisions, particularly at race meetings. The attached form should be completed outlining this process.

# **THUNDERSTORM OR LIGHTNING ACTIVITY REPORT**

<b>Date</b>	
<b>Venue</b>	
<b>Code</b>	
<b>Steward/Official in Charge</b>	
<b>Designated "Weather Watcher"</b>	

<b>Time</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Supporting reasons i.e. 30/15 count or detector readings</b>