

SILVER SPOKES CYCLING CLUB	Revision 1
ADVERSE WEATHER POLICY	April 2024

1. Definitions

“SSCC” – The Silver Spokes Cycling Club

“Member” – An individual who has chosen to join the SSCC and has fully paid the annual fee

“Participant” – An individual who is taking part in an SSCC cycling event

“Ride Leader” – A Participant who has been designated by SSCC to be in charge of a SSCC group ride

2. Purpose

This policy defines circumstances under which SSCC rides will be modified, delayed or cancelled due to weather, and actions to be taken should severe weather occur during a ride. Conditions under which rides are to be cancelled are in accordance with Ontario Cycling’s “Weather Policy and Guidelines.”¹

3. Responsibilities

The SSCC Ride Leader shall be responsible for making decisions regarding cancellation, delay, modification, or stoppage of a ride due to adverse weather conditions that may impact the safety of Participants.

Ride Leaders shall be familiar with the use of weather information sources such as Environment Canada, and various weather forecast websites or apps providing information regarding thunderstorms, precipitation, wind speed and direction, and air quality advisories.

Whenever possible, Ride Leaders should communicate cancellation of a ride due to current or forecast adverse weather conditions at least an hour before the scheduled start.

4. Before the Ride Starts

- a) Prior to a scheduled ride, local weather shall be monitored by SSCC Ride Leaders and Participants. Any weather warnings issued for areas in the ride location shall be taken into consideration by the Ride Leader. In general, rides should be cancelled in the event of a local “Severe Weather Warning” from Environment Canada.

¹ <https://ontariocycling.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/OC-Weather-Policy-Guidelines.pdf>

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- b) SSCC sanctioned rides will be modified², delayed, or cancelled due to the following adverse weather conditions:
- Lightning / thunder
 - Possible tornado / funnel clouds
 - Poor air quality (AQ)
 - Extreme heat and/or humidity
 - Extreme cold
 - Strong winds
 - Poor visibility
 - Other weather conditions (mist, rain, haze, freezing rain/sleet, hail, and snow)
- c) **No outdoor activities will be started when thunder and/or lightning is present.**
 In the event of thunder or lightning prior to the start, the ride will be put on “Hold.” Thirty minutes must pass from the last clap of thunder or flash of lightning before riders may begin the ride. The next occurrence begins a new 30-minute cycle.
- d) Ride leaders shall take into account any Air Quality advisories in effect for the time of the ride and, in the event of poor air quality, may shorten or modify a ride to reduce the expected level of exertion. **Rides shall be cancelled if the expected Air Quality Health Index (AQHI)³ is above 7.**
- e) **Rides shall be cancelled if the temperature is above 40° C at the time of the ride.** For other high temperature conditions, including very high humidity (i.e. humidex above 35° C) ride leaders should consider cancelling or modifying the ride. Participants must ensure that they are carrying adequate hydration before starting the ride.
- f) Ride Leaders shall use their judgement in deciding whether forecast temperatures are too low for a ride, keeping in mind the possible risks of frostbite or hypothermia. In the event that a ride outside of the normal Club road riding season (April to October) is planned, Ontario Cycling guidance is that rides shall be cancelled if the wind chill forecast is below -20° C.
- g) **Rides shall be cancelled if the forecast wind speed is greater than 40 km/hr.** Rides typically involving less fit or experienced riders (e.g. Recreational rides) should be cancelled if wind *gusts* are expected to be above 40 km/hr. Participants shall also use their

² Modifying a ride could involve changing the route, shortening the distance, adding more frequent rest breaks, reducing the expected speed, or where feasible, postponing or changing the starting time of the ride.

³ The AQHI may be found at: <https://www.airqualityontario.com/aqhi/>

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own judgement as to whether to ride during high wind conditions. Ride Leaders should consider wind direction when planning a ride under very windy conditions, so as to avoid crosswinds as much as possible.

- h) **Rides shall be cancelled if visibility is less than 100 m.** Consideration shall be given to cancelling or delaying a ride if visibility due to fog or mist is less than 1 km and is expected to remain poor during the ride. All Participants must use front and flashing rear lights in conditions of poor visibility. Ride Leaders may prohibit Members from participating in a ride if they are not equipped with lights suitable for poor visibility conditions.

5. During a Ride

- a) If thunder and lightning occur once activities have started, utilize the “flash-to-bang” method for determining the distance of lightning: Count the number of seconds between seeing the lightning and hearing the clap of thunder. The time in seconds between “flash to bang” divided by 3 equals (approximately) the distance away in kilometers. For example, if the time from flash to bang is 30 seconds, then the storm is $30/3 = 10$ km away.
- b) A rough rule of thumb is lightning that is closer than 10km poses a risk to participants. **Therefore, if the time between “flash to bang” is 30 seconds or less it is time to stop the event and seek a safe shelter.**
- c) A *safe shelter* is defined as a sturdy building that has metal plumbing or wiring, or both, to electrically ground the structure. A shed or a shack is not a safe shelter. Stay away from tall or individual trees, lone objects (flagpoles), metal objects, standing pools of water, and open fields. If no shelter is available, crouch low, with as little of your body touching the ground as possible. Avoid close contact with others by maintaining a distance of 15-20 feet.
- d) Allow 30 minutes to pass after the last sound of thunder or sight of lightning before resuming any outdoor activities, including walking outside of your shelter.
- e) Should other adverse weather conditions (e.g. heavy rain, high winds) arise *during* a ride, the Ride Leader shall take appropriate measures to mitigate the risk, for example:
- Reducing the speed of the ride
 - Instructing Participants to increase spacing, or to ride single file

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- Instructing all Participants to turn on their lights
- Temporarily stopping the ride and seeking shelter if possible
- Shortening the ride and returning in the safest and most direct way to the starting point