

CITY OF WEST ST. PAUL COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND EVENTS WEATHER POLICY

Policy Statement

The City of West St. Paul reserves the right to cancel programs, classes, or events if inclement weather is forecasted or exists.

General

To protect the health and safety of participants, spectators, and staff, the City of West St. Paul will use the following guidelines and procedures during inclement weather scenarios. The Parks and Recreation Department reserves the right to cancel or modify activities due to weather conditions. Inclement weather will affect programs and facilities differently based on field/location, availability of shelter, and the severity of weather. The City of West St. Paul will follow the general guidance of the National Weather Service (NWS) for weather-related incidences and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for air quality-related incidences.

Cancellations, Delays, and Relocations

Summer/Warm Weather Policy:

Level 1 - Cancellation, Pause, or Delay of All Outdoor and Indoor Events, Classes, and Programs

- Severe weather such as warnings for tornados, floods, and flash floods.

Level 2 - Cancellation, Pause, or Delay of Outdoor Events, Classes, and Programs Serving Primarily Young Children (under 13 years of age), Seniors, and Other Vulnerable Groups

- Excessive Heat: if the forecasted air temperature or heat index is expected to reach and sustain 105 degrees or more
- Air Quality: if the Air Quality Index (AQI) is expected to reach and sustain 'red - unhealthy' or index values of 151-200
- Outdoor programs lasting less than an hour, with access to shade and water may continue, or the ability to alter programming to lessen potential health impacts, may continue under the discretion of the program leader.
- Outdoor programs exceeding an hour may continue if an indoor location is secured and /or the period outdoors can be reduced to an hour.

Level 3 - Cancellation, Pause, Delay, or Change of Location or Other Protocols for Outdoor Events

In such events, city staff, using their best judgment, with the information available, and weighing alternative scenarios may determine to cancel, pause, delay, change location, or enact programmatic protocols.

- Forecasted weather that is not ideal for programming such as anticipated excessive rain, wind, snow, or storms
- Thunderstorms/lightning and severe wind
- Excessive Heat: if the forecasted air temperature or heat index is expected to reach and sustain 110 degrees or more, outdoor events lasting longer than one hour will be cancelled. Those renting outdoor facilities are encouraged to use their best judgment.
- Air Quality: if the Air Quality Index (AQI) reaches 'purple-very unhealthy' or 'maroon-hazardous' or index values above 201, outdoor programs lasting longer than one hour will be cancelled. Those renting outdoor facilities are encouraged to use their best

judgment.

- Impacts from weather events that have left parks and/or facilities in poor condition such as ponding, storm debris, or other damage

Outdoor Pool: The pool will close for the following reasons:

- If lightning is detected, the pool will close for 30 minutes
- If rain or other conditions limit the visibility of the pool by staff, the pool will close until conditions have improved
- If the temperature falls below or is forecasted to fall below 65 degrees, the pool will close or have limited hours
- If heat index reaches or is forecasted to reach 105 degrees, the pool will remain open at the discretion of the Parks and Recreation Department.

Winter/Cold Weather Policy:

Level 1 - Automatic Cancellation, Pause, or Delay of All Outdoor and Indoor Events and Programs

- Blizzard or ice storm warning
- Wind chill warning or if wind chill index reaches -40 degrees

Level 2 - Automatic Cancellation, Pause, or Delay of All Outdoor Events and Programs

- The air temperature reaches -10 degrees or colder
- Wind chill warning or if wind chill index reaches -20 degrees

Level 3 - Potential Cancellation, Pause, Delay, or Change of Location or Other Protocols

- Winter Storm Warning or Snow: Snow event closings will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- Cold: Length of time outdoors may be limited for certain programs, determined on a case-by-case basis.

Weather Updates and Communication

Weather events can change rapidly and forecasting can be difficult. As such, we encourage all participants to use their best judgment and emphasize safety.

Updates will be shared no later than 30 minutes before the event/program on weekdays and one hour prior on weekends. If the message is outdated, assume the activity you are inquiring about is on as scheduled. If conditions change after 4:30 p.m. on weekdays and less than an hour prior to weekend activity a decision will be made on-site.

City-sponsored programs, classes, events, or facility closings will be shared as quickly as possible in the following ways:

- Weather Hotline: 651-259-2671
- Website: <https://wspmn.gov/>
- Social Media: <https://www.facebook.com/cityofwsp/>
- Email to participants for registration-based programs, classes, and events

Refunds

Refunds will not be issued due to inclement weather.

Staff and organizers will make their best efforts to reschedule events and programs, however, this is not always possible. Makeup information will be posted and shared as soon as known.

Events Hosted by Others

The Parks and Recreation Department is not responsible for events scheduled by the school district, State of Minnesota High School Sports, or other private groups that take place within city fields or facilities. Outside rentals, organizations, or school sports using city fields or facilities will be in charge of cancelling or managing their programs and notifying their audiences during weather events. If the city closes a facility to rental due to weather conditions, park facility renters, school sports, or groups using city parks or facilities will be responsible for notifying their participants and guests.

Co-Sponsored Events, Classes, and Programs

If West St. Paul is co-sponsoring an event, class, or program with another city or jurisdiction, the city will follow the weather procedures of the host. For example, if West St. Paul and Mendota Heights are co-sponsoring an event to be held in Mendota Heights, the weather policy and staff of the City of Mendota Heights will determine the operating procedures.

Operating Procedures

Listed below are different weather events and related procedures if inclement weather occurs during a program, event, or operation of a facility.

- Severe weather warning: In the case of severe weather sighting, the issuing of a severe weather warning, or a weather siren sounded, all unsheltered outdoor activities must be stopped. Participants must be out of the water at the outdoor pool. Participants at recreation programs and general park facilities are advised to seek shelter.
- Severe Thunderstorm Warning: Outside activities will cease or observe a delayed start, if necessary. Recreation programs and swimming in the outdoor pool will be suspended until the warning is ended.
- Lightning: Upon first sight of lightning or nearby detection by an electronic device, all outdoor activity must stop immediately. No outdoor activity can resume until 30 minutes after the last detection of lightning. Programs will be moved indoors, if possible.
- Tornado: In the event of a tornado warning or sirens, immediately seek the best possible shelter available. Indoor events will be moved to interiors or basements.
- Heat: If high temperatures are forecasted, activities will be moved indoors if possible. Programs may be altered to lessen physical exertion or to take more regular rest breaks.
- Snow: Snow event closings will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Some facilities may remain closed after a snow event until the facility has been appropriately plowed/shoveled.
- Extreme Cold: Outdoor rinks and warming houses will close if the temperature falls below -10 degrees and/or -20 degrees wind chill. Length of time outdoors may be limited for certain programs, determined on a case-by-case basis.
- Weather Watches: In the event a severe weather watch is issued, program organizers are asked to stay weather aware and to have a plan in place if weather conditions change.