

**Definitions**

Severe weather is any dangerous meteorological phenomenon with the potential to cause damage, serious social disruption, or loss of human life. Types of severe weather phenomena vary, but in Georgia, the most common types include:

* Heavy rain
* Flooding
* Thunderstorms
* High winds
* Hail
* Tornadoes

For each type of severe weather, the National Weather Service (NWS) may issue a watch or a warning. It is important to note that these alerts are one of three different ways to identify the risk of severe weather.

While it is the responsibility of the facility to monitor the potential for severe weather, USA adult members should be aware of the signs of severe weather and not allow athletes in the water until the weather has passed.

If severe weather poses a risk to swimmers and guests, coaches should remove athletes from the water and guide them to a dedicated severe weather safety zone. Athletes should not be allowed to return to the water until 30 minutes after last thunder, the bottom of the pool is visible again, and/or the NWS-issued warning has elapsed.

## When to pull a swimmer out of the water?

**In the event of severe weather, refer to the facility guidelines and/or consult the on-site facility personnel.**

Georgia Swim advises all meet/practice operations should be suspended in any facility that is not grounded under any of the following conditions, **regardless of whether the facility is an indoor or outdoor pool**:

1. Lightning within 6 miles of facility (determined via the Flash-to-Band Method).
2. Heavy rain makes it impossible to clearly see the pool bottom.
3. The National Weather Service issues a tornado warning or other severe weather warning for an area that includes the facility.

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## Severe Weather Safety Zones

**Prior to any severe weather event,** a severe weather safety zone should be identified. USA adult members should consult with the facility lifeguard or site supervisor to determine a severe weather safety zone before any severe weather occurs.

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## In the event of flooding or excessive rainfall

* As runoff collects on the pool deck, it can start to filter into the pool, carrying any outdoor contaminants along with it.
* The on-duty lifeguard should routinely monitor pH levels, alkaline levels, calcium hardness, and chlorine levels as swimmers return to the water.

## Responsibilities

 **Coach \ Meet Referee \ Meet Director**

* Consult with lifeguard/site supervisor to identify severe weather safety zone ahead of time.
* If under a tornado watch or if severe weather is forecasted, designate a responsible person for weather monitoring (not someone who has numerous other responsibilities).
* Follow all guidance from lifeguards/facility supervisors/etc.
* If F-B ≤ 30 (or other indication of severe weather), evacuate the pool deck and area.
	+ Suspend all meet/practice operations.
	+ Dry swimmers off.
	+ Guide swimmers and guests to pre-identified weather safety zones.
* Coordinate with facility staff to determine whether the meet/practice should be cancelled or postponed.