OTAS LIVE

Supporting Events and Professionals at Every Stage

OTAS Insight, event safety. Full report

When the weather makes the call

Fog that hid two firework displays and a televised cup tie in Greater Manchester, a storm that cancelled light trails and Diwali events, and how to agree the numbers that delay, pause or stop your event before the weather decides for you



A steward with a radio stands by crowd barriers in dense fog at night.
OTAS style image, generated from real photography. Not a record of a specific event.

Operational **Tactical** **Strategic**

OTAS Insight v2.0 · 9 November 2026 · Correct as of 9 November 2026

OTAS Live Ltd.

SUMMARY

Fog and wind will not wait for a meeting. Agree the numbers that delay, pause and stop your event, and name the one person who calls it.

2

firework displays in Greater Manchester barely visible in fog on 7 November [1]

100 m

visibility the Met Office said fog could fall below the next night [3]

80 mph

gusts possible on exposed coasts in the storm that cancelled events [4]

ACTION

Before your next outdoor event, write down the wind, fog and lightning numbers that change what you do, and who makes the call.

By OTAS Insights. Edited by Kris Dailly. Correct as of 9 November 2026.



A steward with a radio stands by barriers in thick fog. OTAS style image, generated from real photography. Not a record of a specific event.

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01
Read this first

Sources: 25 public sources opened on 9 November 2026. They are four news reports and one sports report on the fog and the storm, Met Office warning, fog, lightning, storm and wind pages, a Met Office storm summary, HSE event, structure and firework guidance, industry guidance on temporary structures and firework displays, a published wind management plan, RoSPA lightning advice, UKHSA cold weather alerts, the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, the Northern Ireland health and safety Order of 1978 and a report on an inspection of event safety oversight. This Insight does not say any decision was right or wrong. The teams involved made their calls on the night with what they knew. It is about how any event team can agree its weather numbers in advance. We describe events and venues rather than naming them in the text. Some source links carry names. Each fact carries its source number. Everything without a source number is OTAS guidance for event professionals.

On the evening of Saturday 7 November, thick fog settled over Greater Manchester. Flights into the city's airport were diverted, and two firework displays were barely visible. Some people left part way through [1]. At a televised FA Cup tie the same evening, the commentator could not tell which team had the ball from about the hour mark, and players could not see both goals from the centre circle. The game was played to the end, through extra time and penalties. BBC Sport reported it came very close to being called off [2]. The next night the Met Office had fog warnings over much of England, with visibility in places below 100 metres [3]. Two weeks earlier, a named storm brought an amber wind warning and gusts up to 80 mph on exposed coasts. A light trail in Liverpool was cancelled two nights running and a Diwali celebration in central London was called off [4] [5]. This Insight is not about who made the right call. It is about making sure your call is made on numbers you agreed before the weather arrived.

> **In short:** **weather rarely forces a stop on its own. People do, late, when nobody agreed the numbers. Before an outdoor event, set the wind, visibility and lightning triggers for each level of response, name one person who calls delay, pause or stop, and write the words the team and the crowd will hear.**

Five things to take away

01	A warning tells you the weather may change. Your triggers tell you what you will do when it does.
02	Measure wind where and how your structure designer or supplier specifies, against the limits they set, not against a phone app.
03	Set a visibility trigger based on what your stewards, CCTV and display operator need to see.
04	One named person calls delay, pause or stop. Everyone else reports what they see.
05	Write the public address words now, and log every reading and every decision on the night.

ACTION

Read section 12, then agree one task for each level before your next event.



02

What was reported

Two weather events, as reported [1] to [6]. We describe events and venues rather than naming them in the text. Some source links carry names. We do not judge any decision.

A person with a radio watches smoke blow across firework racks at night. OTAS style image, generated from real photography. Not a record of a specific event.

Fog, 7 and 8 November

Where	Greater Manchester on the Saturday evening, then much of England, eastern Wales and Northern Ireland on the Sunday night and Monday morning [1][3].
Displays	Two firework displays were barely visible in the fog. Some people left part way through. One club said it was disappointed but the community still enjoyed the night [1].
A cup tie	Visibility at a televised FA Cup tie was described as down to a few yards. Players could not see both goals or the corner flags from the centre circle. The match went to penalties [1][2].
Warnings	Yellow fog warnings ran to 11:00 on Monday 9 November. Visibility could fall below 100 m. Crashes on the M20 and the A303 were reported in fog [3].

Storm, 24 and 25 October

The warning	An amber wind warning ran from 21:00 on Saturday 24 October to 21:00 on Sunday, with gusts of 60 to 70 mph and up to 80 mph on exposed coasts [4]. The storm was named on 22 October [7].
Cancelled	A free light trail in Liverpool was cancelled for a second night [5]. A Diwali celebration in central London was cancelled on the advice of independent health and safety experts [4].
Closed	A floodlit event at a North Yorkshire estate and a castle in Edinburgh closed. Markets and grass pitch fixtures were called off [4][5].
Afterwards	The Met Office recorded gusts over 70 knots, about 81 mph, on the west coast. Two men died after trees fell [6].

	As reported
Fog displays	Two firework displays barely visible. Some spectators left [1]
Cup tie	Played to the end in fog, through penalties [2]
Fog warnings	Yellow, visibility below 100 m in places [3]
Storm warning	Amber, gusts up to 80 mph on coasts [4]
Storm events	Light trail, Diwali event and floodlit event cancelled or closed [4][5]

Table 1. Fog and storm, as reported. News reports [1][3][4][5], sports report [2], Met Office [6][7].

ACTION

Ask your team: if fog came down an hour before your event tonight, who would decide whether it goes ahead, and on what number?



03

What the guidance says about weather and events

In brief, from the Met Office, HSE and industry guidance [7] to [25].
Not legal advice.

Two people in safety vests look up at a stage roof and truss. OTAS style image, generated from real photography. Not a record of a specific event.

Warnings and forecasts

- The colour of a Met Office warning is set by a combination of the impact the weather may have and how likely it is, so read each warning [8].
- Warnings are issued up to seven days ahead, for rain, thunderstorms, wind, snow, lightning, ice, extreme heat and fog [8].
- Fog means visibility below 1,000 m. Dense fog, which affects driving, means visibility below 100 m [9].
- A storm is named when it could lead to an amber or red warning [7].
- If you can hear thunder you are within range of lightning, which can strike up to 10 miles from the centre of a storm [10].
- The core season for UKHSA Cold Health Alerts runs from 1 November to 31 March. Alerts can also be issued outside it [21].

Temporary structures and wind

- Industry guidance on temporary demountable structures includes wind management plans. HSE lists it on its event safety pages [13][15].
- A published wind management plan sets levels against the operational maximum gust, measured as a 3 second gust at 10 m. At 75 percent with a rising trend, staff go on alert. At 90 percent, the plan is put into action, the site is secured against public access and all but safety critical staff leave [14].
- HSE says monitor and measure the local weather where a structure is susceptible to it. If wind arrangements are not in place, HSE says it may be prudent to keep an exclusion zone of about 1.5 times the tower height around the tower. Ballast must stay in place while the structure is in use [15].
- HSE says consider prevailing wind, flooding and ground conditions in site design [17], and include weather news in site inductions [18].

Fireworks, lightning and the stop

- Industry firework guidance says high winds may mean changing the display or, in extreme conditions, cancelling it or finishing early. Involve the display operator, and do not continue if the operator advises stopping [20].
- HSE says plan for the prevailing wind and what happens if it changes, and recheck weather and wind on the day [19].
- RoSPA advises event organisers to monitor lightning risk from the day before to dispersal, list safe structures, and set criteria to suspend and resume, such as the 30/30 rule [11].
- HSE says plan for sudden bad weather, agree public address wording in advance, and restart only after consultation [16].
- Employers, and self employed people whose work is of a prescribed kind, must run their work so that, so far as is reasonably practicable, people who are not their employees, such as the public, are not exposed to risks to their health or safety [23].
- Northern Ireland has the same kind of duty under the Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978, article 5 [25].

The Purple Guide weather chapter asks organisers to monitor forecasts, plan for weather scenarios, and plan how people will be told if an event is cancelled [12]. A BBC report on a national inspection of event safety oversight said safety advisory groups are not statutory and have no basis in law [24]. They give advice. The legal duties stay with those who run the event [23]. In OTAS guidance, that means the organiser still owns the weather call.

ACTION

List every temporary structure, display and activity at your next event that has a weather limit, and check each limit came from the person who designed or supplies it.

04

Wind, fog and lightning in numbers

The numbers the guidance uses. They are background for your own triggers, not limits for your site.

Wind

- A published wind management plan measures the 3 second gust at 10 m and sets action levels at 75 and 90 percent of the operational maximum gust [14].
- To turn knots into mph, multiply by about 1.15 [22]. The storm on 24 October gusted over 70 knots, about 81 mph, on the west coast [6].
- If wind arrangements are not in place, HSE says it may be prudent to keep an exclusion zone of about 1.5 times the tower height around the tower [15].

Fog

- Fog is visibility below 1,000 m. Below 100 m is dense fog. Public forecasts use 180 m [9].
- Mist is visibility above 1 km [3][9].

Lightning

- Lightning can strike up to 10 miles from the centre of a storm [10].
- The 30/30 rule: suspend at 30 seconds or less from flash to thunder. Restart 30 minutes after the last thunder [11].

ACTION

Write the three numbers that matter most at your next event on the front page of your event safety plan.



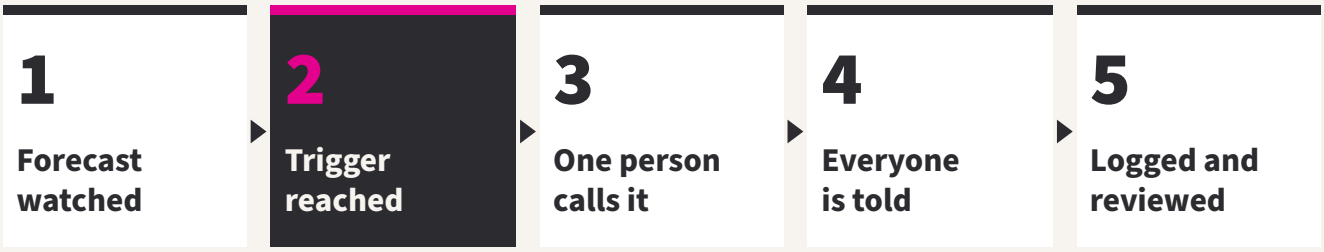
05

Why weather calls come late

Each reason is about people and plans, not the weather. OTAS guidance.

A team in safety vests stands in thick fog under lights. OTAS style image, generated from real photography. Not a record of a specific event.

Decide on the number, not the mood



The trigger is the step that turns a forecast into a decision. OTAS guidance.

A warning is not a trigger

A yellow warning covers a wide area. It does not tell you what to do at your site, so teams wait to see what happens.

No number agreed

If nobody has written the gust, visibility or lightning numbers, every decision becomes a debate on the night.

Everyone waits for someone else

The display operator, the structure supplier, the venue and the safety advisory group each expect another to call it. Safety advisory groups give advice and are not statutory [24]. In OTAS guidance, the organiser decides.

The crowd is already in

Once people have travelled and paid, stopping feels harder. That pressure is strongest at the moment the call matters most.

Fog hides the problem

In fog, stewards cannot see the next post, CCTV loses the far end and the display operator may not see the fall out area. The risk grows while it is harder to see.

ACTION

Find the one weather decision at your next event that nobody has a number for, and agree that number this week.

06

Six things to agree before the event

These are the six things to agree first. OTAS guidance unless a source is shown.

Before the event

The limits	The weather limit for every structure, display and activity, from the person who sets it [13][14].
The triggers	Watch, act and stop for wind, fog, lightning, rain and cold.
The owner	One named person who calls delay, pause or stop, with a deputy.
The operator	The display operator can stop the display, and you will not overrule that [20].
The words	Public address and radio words for delay, pause, stop and restart [16].
The message out	How you will tell people who are not yet on site, by web and social media [12][16].

ACTION

Give each of the six a named owner today.

07

Signs your weather plan will not hold

Each of these is OTAS guidance, drawn from HSE, Met Office and industry guidance.

Signs your weather plan will not hold

01 No numbers

The plan says monitor the weather but sets no wind, visibility or lightning number [16].

02 Wind from a phone

Gusts are read from an app, not where and how the designer or supplier specifies [14][15].

03 No fog plan

Nobody has asked what stewards, CCTV and the display operator need to see [9].

04 Nobody owns the call

The event manager, display operator and supplier each think another decides [20].

05 No words written

There is no public address wording for delay, pause or stop [16].

OTAS guidance, drawn from HSE [15][16], Met Office [9] and industry guidance [14][20].

ACTION

Read your event safety plan for each of these five signs, and fix the first one you find.

08

Plan the weather call, from the first meeting to the night

Five stages. OTAS guidance unless a source is shown.

Five stages, from the limits to the night

STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3	STAGE 4	STAGE 5
Limits	**Triggers**	**Owner**	**Words**	**The night**
From the designer or supplier	Watch, act and stop	One person calls it	Delay, pause, stop, restart	Measure, log, call

From the plan in this Insight. OTAS guidance.

Stage 1. Limits

Collect the weather limit for every temporary structure, display and activity from the person who designed or supplies it [13][14]. Record where each limit is measured, and who reads it.

Stage 2. Triggers

Turn each limit into three levels: watch, act and stop. Add visibility and lightning triggers [9] [11]. Agree them with your display operator, structure suppliers and safety advisory group.

Stage 3. Owner

Name one person who calls delay, pause or stop, and a deputy. Make clear that the display operator can stop the display, and that you will not overrule that [20].

Stage 4. Words

Write the public address and radio words for delay, pause, stop and restart, and how you will tell people who are not yet on site [12][16]. Test them at a table top exercise [16].

Stage 5. On the night

Check the forecast from the day before to dispersal [11]. Read the wind where and how the designer or supplier specifies, and the visibility, at set times. Log every reading and every decision, and call

it when the number is reached.

Part	What it needs
Limits	Every structure, display and activity, with its limit and who set it [13][14]
Triggers	Watch, act and stop for wind, visibility, lightning, rain and cold
The call	One named person and a deputy, and the display operator's stop respected [20]
Measurement	Where wind and visibility are read, by whom and how often [15]
Words	Public address and radio wording for delay, pause, stop and restart [16]
Log	Every reading, trigger, decision and message, with the time

Table 2. What to agree before the event. OTAS guidance.

ACTION

At your next table top exercise, give the team a forecast that worsens every ten minutes and see when they call it.

09

Trigger chart

An example of watch, act and stop levels for each hazard. Your figures come from your designers, suppliers and display operator. OTAS guidance unless a source is shown.

Hazard	Watch	Act	Stop
Wind	Gusts forecast near the lowest structure limit on site [8]	75 percent of the lowest operational maximum gust, and rising. Staff on alert [14]	90 percent. Clear the public from the area [14]
Fog	Fog warning or forecast for your area [8][9]	Stewards cannot see the next post or the far exits. CCTV loses the far end	Stewards, CCTV or the display operator cannot see what they need to keep people safe
Lightning	Thunderstorm or lightning warning, or storms forecast [8][11]	Thunder heard. You are in range [10]	30 seconds or less from flash to thunder. Suspend and move people to shelter [11]
Rain and ground	Heavy rain warning [8]	Standing water on routes or soft ground at entries [17]	Routes or exits no longer safe to use
Cold	Cold Health Alert in force [21]	Long outdoor waits during a delay	Welfare plan in action, or the event ends early

Table 3. Example trigger chart. Replace every limit with the figures set by your designers, suppliers and display operator. OTAS guidance unless a source is shown.

ACTION

Copy this chart into your event safety plan and replace every limit with your own figures.

10

Wind and visibility limits register

One line for every item with a weather limit. Leave a limit blank until you have it in writing.

Item	Limit	Set by	Measured where	Read by
Stage roof and wings	Operational maximum gust: _____	Structure designer or supplier [13] [14]	Where and how the designer specifies, for example a 3 second gust at 10 m above ground [14]	Production manager
PA and screen towers	Operational maximum gust: _____	Supplier [15]	Where and how the supplier specifies [15]	Production manager
Marquees and tents	Wind limit: _____	Supplier	As the supplier specifies	Site manager
Firework display	Wind and visibility for this site: _____	Display operator [19] [20]	Firing site and fall out area	Display operator
Crowd areas and routes	Visibility to see the next post: _____ m	Event safety lead	Steward posts and CCTV	Safety officer

Table 5. Wind and visibility limits register. Leave a limit blank until the person who sets it has given it to you in writing. OTAS guidance.

ACTION

Send this register to every supplier with a structure on site and ask them to fill in their line.

11
Public address scripts

Agree the words before the event, as HSE advises [16]. Keep them short, calm and the same every time. OTAS guidance.

Delay, before doors or the display

- "We are delaying the start because of the weather. Please stay where you are. We will update you in ten minutes."

Pause, during the event

- "We are pausing the show because of the weather. Please stay where you are and follow the stewards. We will update you shortly."

Stop and leave

- "Because of the weather, tonight's event is ending now. Please leave calmly by the nearest exit, following the stewards. Thank you."

Restart

- "Thank you for your patience. The weather has improved and we are ready to restart."

ACTION

Read each script aloud at your next briefing, and record them for your public address system.

12

What to do at each level

Operational

Know the words

Report what you see

Follow the call

Know the words for delay, pause and stop. Report what you see, such as gusts, fog at your post or thunder, straight away. Follow the call when it comes.

Tactical

Read and log

Report the trigger

Brief the words

Read the wind and visibility at set times and log them. Tell the decision owner the moment a trigger is reached. Brief the words at the start of each shift.

Strategic

Set the triggers

Name the owner

Tell people early

Collect the limits, set the triggers and name the person who calls it. Agree them with the display operator and suppliers, and plan how you will tell people who are not yet on site.

ACTION

Pick one action at your level and do it before your next outdoor event this winter.

13
Weather decision log

Keep the log from the first forecast check to dispersal. It shows what you knew, when, and what you did.

Time	Reading	Level	Decision	Called by	Told
Example 18:30	Gust rising, read as the designer specifies, near the act level	Act	Flown items checked, staff on alert	Event manager	Stage, security, PA

Table 4. Weather decision log. Fill in a row for every reading, trigger and decision. OTAS guidance.

ACTION

Print this log for your next outdoor event and give it to the person who reads the wind.

14

Weather call checklist

OTAS guidance unless a source is shown.

Before the day

- Limits collected from every designer and supplier [13][14].
- Triggers agreed for wind, fog, lightning, rain and cold.
- One named person who calls it, and a deputy.
- Public address words written and recorded [16].

On the day

- Forecast checked from the day before to dispersal [11].
- Wind read where and how the designer or supplier specifies, and visibility at the posts, at set times [15].

When a trigger is reached

- Call it. Tell the team, then the crowd.
- Log the reading and the decision.
- Restart only when the risk is back to a tolerable level, staff are in position and the owner has consulted the other key agencies on site, such as the emergency services [16]. Do not restart a display unless the display operator agrees. OTAS guidance.

ACTION

Print this checklist for your next outdoor event.

15
What we do not know yet

- What triggers, if any, the displays and the cup tie in the fog had agreed in advance. This is not public.
- What visibility was measured at each site. The reports describe it, but do not give a figure [1][2].
- How the cancelled storm events reached their decisions, beyond what was reported [4][5].
- Whether any review of the fog evening is planned. None had been announced as of 9 November.

ACTION

We will update this Insight if the organisers, the authorities or the Met Office publish more. We will not judge decisions made on the night.

16

Coming up: winter events and the next named storm

Christmas markets, light trails, switch ons and New Year events run outdoors through the darkest, foggiest and windiest weeks of the year. The core season for Cold Health Alerts runs until 31 March [21], and the Met Office names storms through the winter [7]. The plan that works is the one agreed before the forecast turns.

ACTION

If you need support setting weather triggers and stop decisions for your event, reach out to us to see how we can support you.

Questions

Should we stop when a yellow warning is issued?

Not by itself. A warning tells you what impact the weather could have across an area [8]. Your triggers tell you what to do at your site. Use the warning to start watching and measuring.

What wind speed should we stop at?

The one your structure designer or supplier set for each structure, measured as they say. A published plan used 75 and 90 percent of the operational maximum gust as its alert and action levels [14]. Do not invent one.

Is there a legal visibility limit for events?

No single figure applies to every event. The Met Office calls visibility below 100 m dense fog [9]. Set your trigger by what your stewards, CCTV and display operator need to see.

Who can stop a firework display?

The display operator. Industry guidance says do not continue if the operator advises cancelling or stopping [20]. The organiser can also decide to stop it. This is OTAS guidance.

What is the 30/30 rule?

If the gap between a lightning flash and its thunder is 30 seconds or less, suspend outdoor activity. Wait 30 minutes after the last thunder before restarting [11].

Did the cup tie and the displays in the fog do the wrong thing?

We do not know, and we do not judge it. The reports describe the conditions, not the plans or numbers each team had agreed [1][2].

If fog came down over your event tonight, who would make the call, and on what number?

ACTION

Send us your question and we will add the answer to the next update.

Sources

Web sources opened 9 November 2026 and labelled by source type. Links are for checking only. Listing a source does not mean it endorses OTAS or has worked with OTAS.

1. **Regional newspaper report on thick fog, flight diversions and firework displays in Greater Manchester, 8 November 2026** manchestereveningnews.co.uk
2. **BBC Sport report on an FA Cup tie played in thick fog, 8 November 2026** bbc.co.uk
3. **BBC Weather report on fog warnings across England, Wales and Northern Ireland, 8 November 2026** bbc.com
4. **National newspaper and PA report on a named storm, travel disruption and cancelled events, 24 October 2026** theguardian.com
5. **BBC News report on events and attractions closed by a named storm, 24 October 2026** bbc.co.uk
6. **Met Office, storm summary for two named storms, October 2026** metoffice.gov.uk
7. **Met Office, UK Storm Centre** weather.metoffice.gov.uk
8. **Met Office, weather warnings guide** metoffice.gov.uk
9. **Met Office, fog** metoffice.gov.uk
10. **Met Office, stay safe in thunder and lightning** weather.metoffice.gov.uk
11. **RoSPA, lightning safety** rospa.com
12. **The Purple Guide, weather chapter, January 2026 (subscription)** thepurpleguide.co.uk
13. **Institution of Structural Engineers, Temporary demountable structures: Guidance on procurement, design and use, fourth edition, 2017** istructe.org
14. **Published wind management plan for a temporary structure, filed with a planning application, 2022** docs.planning.org.uk
15. **HSE, event safety, outdoor equipment** hse.gov.uk
16. **HSE, event safety, incidents and emergencies** hse.gov.uk
17. **HSE, event safety, venue and site design** hse.gov.uk
18. **HSE, event safety, managing an event** hse.gov.uk
19. **HSE, organising firework displays** hse.gov.uk
20. **Explosives Industry Group, Working Together on Firework Displays, 2023** eig2.org.uk

21. **UKHSA, Weather Health Alerting System** gov.uk
22. **Met Office, Beaufort wind force scale** metoffice.gov.uk
23. **Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, section 3** legislation.gov.uk
24. **BBC News report on a national inspection of event safety oversight, 4 September 2026** bbc.co.uk
25. **Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978, article 5** legislation.gov.uk

Related OTAS Insights

These are links to other OTAS Insights pieces, not to any OTAS Live product or service.

Overhead banners and arches at winter markets
Stopping the show for the front of stage

Guidance: this Insight summarises Met Office, UKHSA, HSE and industry guidance and health and safety law in Great Britain as published on 9 November 2026. Northern Ireland has its own health and safety law. It is not legal or meteorological advice. Ask your structure designers and suppliers, your display operator and your safety advisory group what applies to your event.

Interest: OTAS Live Ltd, which publishes OTAS Insights, sells event operations services, handbooks and training related to this topic.

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OTAS, our website and OTAS Insights are a work in progress. Get involved and tell us what to improve.

Published by OTAS Live Ltd. General information only, correct as of 9 November 2026. It is not legal or meteorological advice and does not replace your own risk assessment, the limits set by your structure designers and suppliers, or the advice of your display operator and safety advisory group.

Events industry since 2008, internationally since 2015.

OTAS Live Ltd.

By OTAS Insights. Edited by Kris Dailly.

Images are OTAS style images, generated from real photography. None is a record of a specific event.

ACTION

Check the sources before you quote them, and tell us if any link has changed.

OVER TO YOU

If fog came down over your event tonight, who would make the call, and on what number?

If you need support setting weather triggers and stop decisions for your event, reach out to us to see how we can support you.

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