

ADVERSE WEATHER POLICY & PROCEDURES

GUIDELINES FOR CANCELLATION OF WEEKLY SPORT

Heat Out Policy:

- If the prediction is for Melbourne's temperature to reach 35⁰ C, then all sport is cancelled by 8.00am on the day by the EISM Executive Officer who shall notify schools by email.
- If during sport, temperatures rise to an excessive level, coaches are encouraged to shorten matches and follow guidelines for playing safely in hot weather. If matches are to be shortened coaches should, where possible, agree on the timeframes before play starts. For example, reduce the number of sets in tennis or volleyball, play four quarters instead of halves in soccer, reduce the number of overs in cricket and have more drinks breaks.
- All scheduled matches on "Heat Out" days are deemed a draw and are not subject to being re-scheduled. Schools with a bye to receive 4 points. Other matches from that round that are scheduled to be played on a different date are to proceed as listed. Results of matches already played will stand.
- If the temperature is scheduled to be in the 30's, a Principal can take local conditions into account and cancel a day's sport that is being hosted by their school.
- If there is hot weather forecast, when both Heads of Sport agree, the matches between those schools can be cancelled prior to the day.
- If a Heat Out" is declared on a Grand Final day, it may proceed if it is being played in an air-conditioned venue.

Wet Weather:

- Cricket, lawn bowls, softball and tennis are sports that will be disrupted by rain. Sports coordinators, coaches and officials will need to determine on a match-by-match basis whether matches affected by wet weather shall be cancelled.
- Football, hockey, netball soccer, touch & ultimate frisbee are played in wet weather. Players, staff & officials are to seek shelter immediately in the event of thunderstorms or severe hail.
- Electrical storms/ Lightning: In the event of electrical/ thunderstorms, (especially if the time delay between thunder and the flash is less than 30 seconds) players, coaches and officials should seek urgent safe shelter. Play should only restart if at least 20 minutes has passed since the last sound of thunder and coaches and officials are confident of player safety.
- Severe Hail: When safety is compromised by severe hail, coaches and officials should agree to abandon play and seek immediate shelter until the hail stops and it is safe to restart play.
- If circumstances at a venue force a cancellation, the match should be rescheduled (if possible) or deemed a draw. If the match started but was then abandoned refer to 'Conduct of Weekly Sport' for Allocation of Results for Incomplete Matches.

Severe Weather Warnings

- If there is a Code Red warning issued, there will be no EISM sport on that day.
- If there is a severe weather warning issued by the Bureau of Meteorology, the Head of Sport is to monitor local conditions.
- The Principal is to be advised and given an update of conditions. If they or their delegate deem it to be unsafe for outdoor sports to be played at their school or home venue, the matches are cancelled and deemed a draw.
- The visiting schools need to be advised of this as soon as possible.

Unsafe Playing Conditions

If a coach and an official agree that a playing surface is unsafe then the match shall be rescheduled (if possible) or deemed a draw. If the match started but was then abandoned refer to 'Conduct of Weekly Sport' for Allocation of Results for Incomplete Matches.

Allocation of Results for Incomplete Matches (weather event, injury, etc)

Refer to Conduct of Weekly Sport.

a) Heat Out Procedures

When the temperature is forecast to reach 35⁰C *during* any part of the competition time of the event, the event is to be cancelled. The Executive Officer is to check 24hrs before each event as to what the maximum temperature will be during that event. Schools will therefore receive a 24hr notice that there has been a cancellation. Forecast temperatures are to be taken from the free 'Weatherzone' App

- Events at Ringwood are to use the weather station at Scoresby.
- Events at MSAC are to use the weather station at Melbourne.
- Events at Ruffey Lake are to use the weather station at Doncaster.
- Events at Point Leo are to use the weather station at Shoreham.

b) Adverse Weather

In the event of adverse weather, unless otherwise notified, teams are to report to the Event venues at the usual starting time. If conditions remain unpleasant, the program may be abridged following discussions between the EISM and Officials.

c) Severe Weather Warnings

- If there is a severe weather warning issued by the Bureau of Meteorology, the Executive Officer will determine if the conditions are safe for the event to commence.
- If the event is deemed to be safe to commence, the Principal of each participating school can decide as to whether their school will be involved.

PROTOCOL FOR ACTION DURING LIGHTNING STRIKES & HAIL:

In Australia, 85% of lightning victims are children or young men aged 10-35 engaged in outdoor recreational activities and 70% of all those occur in the afternoon. Related injuries may include hearing damage, burns or even electrocution.

The distance (in km) to lightning can be estimated by dividing the time delay (in seconds) between the flash and the thunder by 3. In the event of thunderstorms, especially if the time delay between thunder and the flash is less than 30 seconds, players, coaches and officials should seek urgent shelter and follow the guidelines for protection against lightning strikes. All should remain sheltered for at least 30 minutes after the last sound of thunder. Play should only restart if at least 30 minutes has passed since the last sound of thunder and coaches and officials are confident of player safety.

When safety is compromised by severe hail, coaches and officials should agree to abandon play and seek immediate shelter until the hail stops and it is safe to restart play.

a) If Caught Outdoors

- Seek shelter in a hard-top (metal-bodied) vehicle or solid building but **avoid** small open structures or fabric tents
- **Never** shelter under small groups of (or single) trees
- If far from shelter, crouch alone, feet together, preferably in a hollow. Remove metal objects from head/body. **Don't** lie down flat but avoid being the highest object in the vicinity
- If your hair stands on end or you hear 'buzzing' from nearby rocks, fences, etc, move **immediately**. At night a blue glow may show if an object is about to be struck (St Elmo's fire)
- **Don't** handle, fishing rods, umbrellas or golf clubs
- **Stay away** from metal poles, fences, clothes lines etc
- **Don't** ride horses, bicycles or travel in open vehicles
- If driving, slow down or park away from trees, power lines etc. Stay inside metal-bodies (hard top) vehicles or caravans but **don't** touch any metal sections.
- If swimming, surfing etc, **leave** the water **immediately**.

b) Lightning Facts

- If your clothes are wet, you are less likely to be seriously injured if struck, as most of the charge will conduct through the wet clothes rather than your body.
- Lightning **can** and often **does**, strike more than once in the same place.
- When struck, people do **not** glow or 'fry to a crisp' but the heart and breathing are often affected.
- Only about 30% of people struck actually die, and the incidence of long-term disability is low, particularly when appropriate first aid is applied **promptly**.

c) First Aid

Apply **immediate** CPR to lightning victims until medical help arrives and they will have a good chance of survival. (You won't receive a shock from the victim.)

PREVENTING HEAT ILLNESS IN SPORT AND PLAYING SAFELY IN HOT WEATHER:

a) **Factors Which Can Contribute to Heat Injury**

- High ambient (air) temperature
- Solar radiation
- Humidity
- Dehydration

b) **How to Recognise if Someone Has Heat Injury?**

Heat injury presents itself in different ways, including cramps, heat exhaustion & heat stroke.

i) **Heat Exhaustion**

Dehydration can lead to heat exhaustion. Symptoms of heat exhaustion may include:

- High heart rate
- Dizziness
- Loss of endurance/skill
- Confusion
- Nausea
- Cool skin but paler than normal
- Little urine passed, but highly concentrated
- Cramps (associated with dehydration)

If a player shows signs of heat exhaustion take the following action:

- Remove from the field
- Lay the player down in a cool place
- Give plenty of cool water
- If the player is confused or unable to drink water seek medical help immediately

ii) **Heat Stroke**

Severe dehydration may lead to heat stroke, which is potentially fatal and must be treated immediately by a medical practitioner. Athletes who keep participating when suffering from heat exhaustion may experience heat stroke. Heat stroke can occur even if the athlete has been drinking plenty of fluid. It is important to cool the athlete as quickly as possible. Heat stroke symptoms may include *dry skin, confusion or collapsing*.

If a player is showing any signs and symptoms of heat stroke take the following action:

- Call a doctor or ambulance immediately
- Remove the player from the field and lay the player down in a cool place
- Give cool water to drink if conscious
- Cool the player in a cool bath, shower or under a hose, applying ice packs to the groin and armpits or use wet towels
- Maximise airflow over the player through the use of a fan or fan them with towels

c) **What Steps Can Be Taken to Prevent Players getting Heat Injury?**

i) **Hydration**

- The more an athlete sweats, the more fluid they must consume to avoid dehydration
- To reduce the risk of heat illness fluids should be consumed before, during and after activity
- Thirst is not reliable as an indicator of a participant's fluid needs
- Dehydration can occur even when lots of fluid has been consumed

- It is recommended that participants drink fluid at regular intervals during exercise to replace water lost through sweating. Fluid taken should be cooler than the ambient (air) temperature
 - Research indicates that sports drinks such as Gatorade can be beneficial for replacing fluids, energy and electrolytes lost during exercise.
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c) What Steps Can Be Taken to Prevent Players getting Heat Injury? cont'd

ii) Clothing

- Light colours, loose fitting clothes of natural fibres with absorption properties that provide adequate ventilation are recommended as the most appropriate clothing in the heat.

iii) Player Rest and Rotation

- In conditions of high risk participants should be provided opportunities to rest, through the use of player interchange or substitution, for at least 25% of the playing period.
- Matches can be shortened, taking more frequent rest breaks
- The positive effects of rest breaks can be maximised by allowing players to rest in naturally shaded areas, or providing portable structures that create shade when and provide additional fluids to allow participants to spray or douse themselves.

iv) Other issues

- Surface Type: a shaded/protected grass surface does not retain as much heat as other surfaces such as black asphalt
- Prior Medical Conditions: It is important to know if any athletes have any medical condition or are taking medication that may predispose them to heat illness, e.g. asthma, diabetes, pregnancy, heart conditions and epilepsy. Any player that is experiencing a high temperature, viral infection, diarrhoea or vomiting should be excluded from playing due to the increased risk of heat illness.
- Hats and Sunscreens: should also be used to assist in the prevention of heat illness. Sunscreens should be water soluble and hats should be well ventilated.
- Sports Trainers and First Aid Personnel: It is important to have trained personnel available to manage heat injuries. Heat stroke is potentially life threatening so any indication of this condition should be immediately referred for medical assessment and every effort made to cool the athlete in the meantime.