



Athletics **ACT**

EXTREME WEATHER POLICY

(Approved: December 2018)

Policy, Guidelines and Recommendations

for

**Affiliated clubs, members and Athletics ACT
Sanctioned competitions and events**

Athletics ACT Extreme Weather Policy

1. OVERVIEW

Athletics ACT is the peak organisation for the sport of athletics in the ACT and surrounding regions. Athletics ACT has a responsibility to take a positive role in educating and increasing the awareness of its registered members in regards to the dangers of physical activity in extreme weather conditions. With this in mind, the Athletics ACT Extreme Weather Policy for affiliated clubs, members, and Athletics ACT sanctioned competitions and events has been developed in consideration of the guidelines produced by Sports Medicine Australia (SMA) for hot weather and also in consideration of the risks associated with other weather conditions such as electrical storms and extreme cold.

This policy shall apply to all members, administrators, officials, coaches and athletes associated with Athletics ACT and its affiliated clubs.

2. RESPONSIBILITY

Athletics ACT acknowledges it has a responsibility and duty of care to ensure the safety of participants, particularly in competitions and events conducted by and on behalf of Athletics ACT. The following recommended guidelines have been endorsed by Athletics ACT to assist our association, its affiliated clubs and members in deciding whether to modify, cancel or postpone events or training. It must be noted that at all times the safety of our participants will be the priority of all decisions.

3. NOTIFICATION

Careful consideration is given with respect as to whether to cancel or postpone an Athletics ACT competition or event. Should it be deemed necessary under this policy to cancel a competition or event, Athletics ACT will endeavour to notify all affected athletes, coaches, and officials. Athletics ACT will communicate any changes via the following methods:

- A news item will be placed on the Athletics ACT website advising of the cancellation or postponement of a competition or event
- An email will be sent to the Athletics ACT database advising all current registered athletes, coaches, and officials of the cancellation or postponement
- Notification will be provided via Athletics ACT social media channels such as Facebook and Twitter

HOT WEATHER

4.1 Temperature Determination

The forecast maximum temperature referred to in this section is that issued by the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) at 4:00pm local time two days prior to competition (i.e. 4pm Thursday for a competition to be conducted on a Saturday).

Members are encouraged to refer to the Bureau's website, which can be found at www.bom.gov.au

The following clauses detail measures that will be taken during hot weather. Changes to competition scheduling or programming or cancellation can be summarised as follows:

- Forecast temperatures of **30 degrees or less** – no change
- Forecast temperatures between **31 and 37 degrees** – possible modifications to distance event programming when temperatures reach the upper end of this range
- Forecast temperatures between **38 and 40 degrees** - competition may move to a cooler part of the day, or evening, at the discretion of the Competition Manager in collaboration with members of the Competition Committee. Distance events over 1500m may be cancelled, and officials will be required to have a 10-minute break for each hour of competition
- Forecast temperatures **41 degrees and above** – competition may be postponed until after sunset with a modified program or cancelled

4.2 Recommended Guidelines and Actions for Competition and Events Conducted in Hot Weather

Temperatures 30 degrees or less

4.2.1 For competitions where the forecast maximum temperature is 30 degrees or below, participants should exercise caution, particularly in endurance events or those that require the participants to remain in direct sunlight for an extended period of time

4.2.2 Participants should drink often to remain hydrated and implement sun smart procedures (e.g. long sleeve shirt, hat, sunglasses, sunscreen)

4.2.3 No competition modifications are recommended, however distance events are best held in the coolest part of the competition period.

Temperatures between 31 and 37 degrees (inclusive)

4.2.4 For competitions where the forecast maximum temperature is between 31 and 37 degrees (inclusive), participants should exercise caution, particularly in endurance events such as long distance running

4.2.5 Distance events should be scheduled in the coolest part of the competition program

4.2.6 Athletes should carefully consider the number of events they compete in over the course of the competition, particularly when temperatures reach the higher end of this range

4.2.7 Athletics ACT will provide shade at event sites for athletes and officials where possible

4.2.8 If the predicted temperature is 35 degrees or above, Athletics ACT will make water available for athletes and officials

4.2.9 Participants should drink often to remain hydrated and implement sun smart procedures (e.g. long sleeve shirt, hat, sunglasses, sunscreen)

4.2.10 Modifications to the competition program may be considered at the discretion of the Competition Manager and the Competition Committee and this decision will be made at 4pm two days prior to competition

Temperatures between 38 and 40 degrees (inclusive)

4.2.11 For competition where the forecast maximum temperature is between 38 and 40 degrees (inclusive), participants should exercise extreme caution

4.2.12 All track and field competitions will be moved to a cooler part of the day/evening at the discretion of the Competition Manager after discussion with members of the Competition Committee

4.2.13 Distance running events exceeding 1500m in length may be cancelled

4.2.14 Athletes and Officials, should consider reducing the number of events in which they participate

4.2.15 All officials will be required to leave the field and take a 10 minute break for every hour of competition

4.2.16 Athletics ACT will make water available for all athletes and officials

4.2.17 Participants should drink often to remain hydrated and implement sun smart procedures (e.g. long sleeve shirt, hat, sunglasses, sunscreen)

Temperatures 41 degrees and above

4.2.18 Where the predicted maximum temperature is 41 degrees or above, Athletics ACT competition may be postponed until after sunset or cancelled at the discretion of the Competition Manager after discussion with members of the Competition Committee

4.2.19 Should competition go ahead, an alternate, modified competition program will be created

Discretionary Cancellation

4.2.20 Athletics ACT reserves the right to cancel any competition at its absolute discretion if it is deemed that the environmental conditions, such as extreme humidity, cold, hail, lightning, or heavy rain present a serious health risk to athletes and officials, even if temperatures falls within the acceptable levels detailed within this policy document

Further Recommended Actions

4.2.21 Coaches, Managers and Officials strongly promote and encourage fluid replacement before the competition, during breaks and after the competition

4.2.22 Where possible, Athletics ACT, clubs or facility providers will promote fluid replacement before, during and after the competition over the PA System

4.2.23 Athletics ACT, clubs or facility providers will strongly promote the use of existing shaded areas by participants during breaks in activity

4.2.24 Athletics ACT, clubs or facility managers will provide extra temporary shade where possible

4.2.25 Elderly participants, female participants, young children, and those with predisposed medical conditions are at a higher risk of heat related illness and are therefore encouraged to carefully consider their level of participation in athletic events in extreme heat conditions

Recommended Guidelines and Actions for Club Training

4.2.26 When the predicted temperature on the day of a training session is 30 degrees or above, clubs and coaches should consider making modifications to training sessions in the following ways

- Train early in the morning or late at night (preferably after sunset) to avoid the hottest part of the day
- Consider reducing the intensity and or duration of the training session
- Take frequent breaks in the shade where possible and complete instructional time and recovery periods in shaded areas where available.
- Clubs and coaches should consider providing extra shade (e.g. pop top tents) where possible
- Clubs, coaches, parents, and training partners should encourage participants to drink before and after, and often during the training session to ensure adequate hydration
- Clubs and coaches could also consider moving the training session to an alternate environment (e.g. swimming pool)
- The decision to cancel training is the responsibility of clubs and coaches

- Coaches should closely monitor all athletes' response to the conditions and make adjustments to the training load and duration for each athlete if necessary
- Clubs and coaches should ensure that water is available to all athletes when training sessions are conducted in extreme heat
- If the temperature is above 38 degrees and above, clubs and coaches should consider postponing or cancelling the training session.

4.2.27 All affiliated clubs and members are strongly encouraged to familiarise themselves with the Athletics ACT Extreme Weather Policy Guidelines and Recommendations

4.2.28 Clubs through administrators, team coaches and managers should:

- actively encourage participants to bring personal drink bottles to both training sessions and competitions
- educate participants about the importance of hydration, maintaining fluid levels and drinking before, during and after participation
- be aware of any participant with existing medical conditions (e.g. cold, flu, asthma, heart conditions etc)
- remind participants that if they are feeling dizzy, faint or nauseous to discontinue activity and seek medical attention
- keep an eye out for any participant looking confused or suffering any loss of endurance or skill level – this can be a sign of heat exhaustion

5. THUNDERSTORMS

Thunderstorms present a significant risk to athletes, coaches, and officials when they occur in the vicinity of training or competition and event locations. In particular, thunderstorms that occur in and around an open area such as an athletics arena present a significant risk to life. Storms can also develop quickly.

It is widely recognised that a significant lightning threat extends outward of the thunderstorm cloud for approximately 10-15 kilometres, thus, when a storm is within this range, appropriate action should be taken to minimise the danger to participants. As a general guide, the ability to hear thunder is usually an indication that the storm is within 10-15 kilometres or your location.

In the event of the threat of a thunderstorm, the following actions should occur:

5.1 Prior to and during training, competition or events, the BOM weather forecast should be monitored, and in particular the presence of a severe weather warning indicating a change of thunderstorms

5.2 If a severe weather warning is in effect or if thunderstorms are predicted, cancelling or postponing the training session, competition or event should be strongly considered

In the event that thunder is heard or a thunderstorm occurs during Athletics ACT training, competition or events the following action will be taken:

5.3 The Competition Manager will ask all participants to immediately leave the arena or competition / training area and proceed inside a substantial building such as an office block, school or house

5.4 It should be noted that small outdoor buildings, rain shelters and sheds are not considered substantial buildings and are not deemed to be a safe area to shelter

5.5 In the event that a substantial building is not available for shelter, a hard-topped metal vehicle with windows closed also provides good protection, but contact with metal surfaces in the vehicle should be avoided

5.6 Evacuation from the area to a safe location will be coordinated through PA announcements where available

5.7 Individuals should shelter inside away from windows and avoid contact with metal surfaces until the storm has passed

5.8 Any contact with electrical equipment and wiring should be avoided during an electrical storm

5.9 Corded phones should not be used during an electrical storm. Mobile phones and cordless phones are safe to use

5.10 Once an electrical storm has passed, activity should not resume for another 30 minutes as electrical charges can linger in clouds after the storm has passed

5.11 At this time, the Competition Manager, or designated Technical Officials, will assess the area for damage before determining whether competition, training or the event should resume

5.12 No individuals will be permitted to return to the arena or competition / training area until the all clear is given by the Competition Manager

6. STRONG WINDS

Strong winds present a safety risk to athletes, coaches, officials, staff and spectators in track and field and related competitions, events and training.

In the event of the threat of occurrence of strong winds, the following actions should occur:

6.1 Prior to and during training, competition or events, the BOM weather forecast should be monitored, and in particular the presence of a severe weather warning indicating strong winds

6.2 If a severe weather warning is in effect or if strong winds are predicted, cancelling or postponing the training session, competition or event should be strongly considered

In the event that strong winds occurs during Athletics ACT training, competition or events the following action will be taken:

6.3 The Competition Manager or designated Technical Officials will ask all participants to immediately leave the arena or competition / training area and proceed inside a substantial building such as an office block, school or house

6.4 It should be noted that small outdoor buildings, rain shelters and sheds are not considered substantial buildings and are not deemed to be a safe area to shelter

6.5 In the event that a substantial building is not available for shelter, a hard-topped metal vehicle with windows closed may also provide good protection

6.6 Evacuation from the area to a safe location will be coordinated through PA announcements where available

6.7 Individuals should shelter inside away from windows until the threat has passed

6.8 Once strong winds have ceased, the Competition Manager or designated person will assess the area for damage before determining whether competition, training or the event should resume

6.9 No individuals will be permitted to return to the arena or competition / training area until the all clear is given by the Competition Manager

7. LOW VISIBILITY

Low visibility can present a safety risk to athletes, coaches, officials, staff and spectators in track and field and related competitions, events and training.

In the event of the threat of conditions resulting in low visibility, the following actions should occur:

7.1 Prior to and during training, competition or events, the BOM weather forecast should be monitored, and in particular the presence of a severe weather warning indicating conditions of low visibility

7.2 If a severe weather warning is in effect or if low visibility is predicted, cancelling or postponing the training session, competition or event should be strongly considered

In the event that conditions create a situation of low visibility during Athletics ACT training, competition or events that reduced visibility to less than 200 metres, the following action will be taken:

7.3 The Competition Manager or designated Technical Officials will immediately cease the competition, training or event

7.4 Where possible, announcements will be made via a PA system or coordinated through the use of event radios

7.5 Once visibility has improved to beyond 200 metres, the Competition Manager or designated person will make a decision regarding whether to continue with or cancel the event

8. EXTREME COLD

Extreme cold can present a safety risk to athletes, coaches, officials, staff and spectators in track and field and related competitions, events and training.

In the event of the threat of conditions resulting in extreme cold, the following actions should occur:

8.1 Prior to and during training, competition or events, the BOM weather forecast should be monitored, and in particular the presence of a severe weather warning indicating conditions of severe cold

8.2 If a severe cold weather warning is in effect or if severe cold is predicted, cancelling or postponing the training session, competition or event should be strongly considered

8.3 Participants are strongly encouraged to wear adequate clothing to maintain a healthy core body temperature

In the event that conditions create a situation of severe cold immediately prior or during Athletics ACT training, competition or events the following action will be taken:

8.4 The Competition Manager or designated Technical Officials will consider, the safety and wellbeing of all participants if the ground is slippery from frost, snow, rain or mud, or if the temp drops below 8 degrees (including wind chill factor) and has the discretion to postpone or cancel the event

8.5 Where possible, announcements will be made via a PA system or coordinated through the use of event radios

9. INTENDED USE

This document is intended to be used as a guide only. Ultimately, every person is different and individuals will respond to participation in physical activity in extreme conditions in different ways. To this end, individuals are encouraged to assess their level of participation in athletic events and training in order to best avoid illness or injury in extreme weather conditions.

10. APPROVAL AND REVIEW

The Board of Athletics ACT adopted this policy on 13 November 2018.

This policy is due for review: November 2020

Athletics ACT would like to acknowledge and extend our appreciation to Athletics SA for allowing us to use their Extreme Weather Policy as the basis of this document.