



Athletics
South Australia

EXTREME WEATHER POLICY

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1. Purpose

To guide the modification, postponement or cancellation of training and competition in periods of extreme weather.

2. Scope

Athletics SA (ASA) has a duty of care to protect everyone associated with Athletics from extreme weather and the subsequent possibilities.

Staff	Board Members	Clubs	Officials and Volunteers	Athletes	Event Attendees
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

3. Policy Statement

Athletics SA 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 SA. With this in mind, the Athletics SA Extreme Weather Policy for affiliated clubs, members, and Athletics SA sanctioned competitions and events has been developed in consideration of the guidelines produced by Sports Medicine Australia (SMA) for hot weather, Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) for smoke and also in consideration of the risks associated with other extreme weather conditions such as electrical storms.

4. Notification

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

- A news item will be placed on the Athletics SA website advising of the cancellation or postponement of a competition or event;
- An email will be sent to the Athletics SA database advising all current registered athletes, coaches, and officials of the cancellation or postponement;
- Notification will be provided via Athletics SA social media channels such as Facebook
- The digital check in system will be deployed to notify athletes of the event cancellation.

5. Hot Weather

5.1 Temperature Determination

The forecast maximum temperature referred to in this section is that issued by the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) at 4:00pm CDT 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 39 degrees** - competition may move to a cooler part of the day at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer, after discussion with the Events Manager. 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 **40 degrees and above** – competition may be postponed until after sunset with a modified program or cancelled

5.2 Recommended Guidelines and Actions for Competition and Events Conducted in Extreme Weather

Temperatures 30 degrees or less

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

- 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
- Distance events should be scheduled in the coolest part of the competition program
- 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
- Athletics SA will provide shade at event sites for athletes and officials where possible
- If the predicted temperature is 35 degrees or above, Athletics SA will make water available for athletes and officials

- Participants should drink often to remain hydrated and implement sun smart procedures (e.g. long sleeve shirt, hat, sunglasses, sunscreen)
- Modifications to the competition program may be considered at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer and this decision will be made at 4pm two days prior to competition

Temperatures between 38 and 39 degrees (inclusive)

- For competition where the forecast maximum temperature is between 38 and 39 degrees (inclusive), participants should exercise extreme caution
- All track and field competitions will be moved to a cooler part of the day at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer after discussion with the Events Manager
- Distance running events exceeding 1500m in length may be cancelled
- Athletes and Officials should consider reducing the number of events in which they participate
- All officials will be required to leave the field and take a 10 minute break for every hour of competition
- Athletics SA will make water available for all athletes and officials
- Participants should drink often to remain hydrated and implement sun smart procedures (e.g. long sleeve shirt, hat, sunglasses, sunscreen)

Temperatures 40 degrees and above

- Where the predicted maximum temperature is 40 degrees or above, Athletics SA competition may be postponed until after sunset or cancelled at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer
- Should competition go ahead, an alternate, modified competition program will be created

Further Recommended Actions

- Coaches, Managers and Officials strongly promote and encourage fluid replacement before the competition, during breaks and after the competition
- Where possible, Athletics SA, clubs or facility providers will promote fluid replacement before, during and after the competition over the PA System
- Athletics SA, clubs or facility providers will strongly promote the use of existing shaded areas by participants during breaks in activity
- Athletics SA, clubs or facility managers will provide extra temporary shade where possible
- 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

5.3 Recommended Guidelines and Actions for Club Training

- When the predicted temperature on the day of a training session is 35 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. beach or 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.
- All affiliated clubs and members are strongly encouraged to familiarise themselves with these Athletics SA Extreme Weather Policy Guidelines and Recommendations
 - 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

6. 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 of your location.

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

- 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 chance of thunderstorms
- 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

6.2 In the event that lightning is seen and/or thunder is heard or a thunderstorm occurs during Athletics SA training, competition or events the following action will be taken:

- Determining the threat shall be done using the **30/30 rule**.
30 seconds - count the seconds between seeing lightning and hearing thunder. If this is less than 30 seconds, lightning is a threat. Even if you can't see the lightning, just hearing the thunder is a good backup rule.
- Participants to immediately leave the arena or competition / training area and seek shelter inside a substantial building such as an office block, school or house.
- 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
- 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
- Evacuation from the area to a safe location will be coordinated through PA announcements where available
- Individuals should shelter inside away from windows and avoid contact with metal surfaces until the storm has passed
- Any contact with electrical equipment and wiring should be avoided during an electrical storm
- Corded phones should not be used during an electrical storm. Mobile phones and cordless phones are safe to use

- **30 minutes** – after hearing the last rumble of thunder, wait 30 minutes before leaving shelter and resuming activity as electrical charges can linger in clouds after the storm has passed
- At this time, the Events Manager or designated person will assess the area for damage before determining whether competition, training or the event should resume
- No individuals will be permitted to return to the arena or competition / training area until the all clear is given by the Events Manager

7. 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.

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

- 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
- 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

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

- The Event 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
- It should be noted that small outdoor buildings, shelters and sheds are not considered substantial buildings and are not deemed to be a safe area to shelter
- 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
- Evacuation from the area to a safe location will be coordinated through PA announcements where available
- Individuals should shelter inside away from windows until the threat has passed
- Once strong winds have ceased, the Events Manager or designated person will assess the area for damage before determining whether competition, training or the event should resume
- No individuals will be permitted to return to the arena or competition / training area until the all clear is given by the Events Manager

8. 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.

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

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

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

- The Events Manager will immediately modify or cease the competition, training or event.
- Where possible, announcements will be made via a PA system or coordinated through the use of event radios.
- Once visibility has improved to beyond 200 metres, the Events Manager or designated person will make a decision regarding whether to continue with or cancel the event

9. Air Quality

Poor air quality (such as from bushfire smoke) can pose a health risk to athletes. The health impact can vary based on an individual's current health status and previous medical conditions. Athletes involved in high performance sport can be at high risk while performing high intensity prolonged exercise outdoors and additional caution should be taken.

Smoke impacts the air quality which is measured using the Air Quality Index (AQI). AQI ranges from Very Good (0-33) to Very Poor (150+).

In the event of smoky conditions, the following actions should occur:

Poor Air Quality (100-150):

- For endurance and high intensity exercise, asthmatics or athletes who experience asthma like symptoms should not compete or train outdoors. Minimise asymptomatic athlete exposure. For low intensity exercise, sensitive groups (like asthmatics) should avoid strenuous outdoor activities and for everyone else it is recommended cutting back or rescheduling strenuous outdoor activities.

Very Poor Air Quality (150+)

- For endurance and high intensity exercise, outdoor competitions and training should be rescheduled indoors where possible. Exposure should be minimised for everyone. If competitions or trainings cannot be moved indoors, rescheduling or cancellation should be strongly considered. For low intensity exercise, sensitive groups (like asthmatics) should avoid strenuous outdoor activities and for everyone else it is recommended cutting back or rescheduling strenuous outdoor activities.

AQI levels can be viewed on the EPA South Australia website.

10. Discretionary Cancellation

Athletics SA reserves the right to cancel any competition at its absolute discretion if it is deemed that the environmental conditions present a serious health risk to athletes and officials, even if conditions fall within the acceptable levels detailed within this policy document.

11. 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.

12. Responsibilities and Delegations

The Board and Senior Management are responsible for:

- The policy and recommendations within
- Chief Executive Officer for modifications, postponements and cancellation decisions Event Manager on day

Managers are responsible for:

- Events Manager for actioning the detailed recommendations

Workers are responsible for:

- Alerting the Events Manager to changes in forecasts and conditions that may impact the application of this policy and recommendations
- Following through and implementing the instructions of the Events Manager

Other persons are responsible for:

- Adhering to the instructions of those in authority

13. Definitions and Abbreviations

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
ASA	Athletics SA
SMA	Sports Medicine Australia
AIS	Australian Institute of Sport
BOM	Bureau of Meteorology
AQI	Air Quality Index

14. References and Related Documents

Weather Forecast - Bureau of Meteorology (BOM)

<http://www.bom.gov.au/sa/forecasts/adelaide.shtml>

Smoke Pollution and Exercise – Australian Institute of Sport

https://www.ais.gov.au/position_statements/best_practice_content/smoke-pollution-and-exercise

Air Quality Monitoring - EPA South Australia

https://www.epa.sa.gov.au/environmental_info/air_quality/new-air-quality-monitoring

Sports Medicine Australia

<https://sma.org.au/>

15. Authorisation

This policy was adopted by the Board of Athletics South Australia on 14th November 2014.

This policy was last updated on: 4th October 2023