

Hydration Policy

Education

All Athletes should be educated on the importance of sun safety and how to be sun smart. This should be conducted at the beginning of the hot weather season. However, if this is untimely for the Clubs then it should be conducted at a more appropriate time. The Club coach or another qualified Club official should conduct the education seminars.

The education seminars need to be extended to staff members, officials and volunteers that work closely with the athletes throughout competitions. Their education will specifically show them how to identify those athletes suffering from the symptoms of heat illness.

This education program will hopefully aid in the early detection of heat illness. Thus medical treatment can be sought quickly and hopefully be more effective. (See Appendix A for symptoms of heat exhaustion)

Appropriate Attire

All athletes, ANT staff members, officials and volunteers must be wearing sun safe attire when competing and working at competition days and whilst exposed to the sun (except when competing) hats or caps should be worn at all times.

Clubs should ensure that Club uniforms are as sun safe as possible remembering they must meet Association uniform standards i.e. shirts with collars and sleeves and wherever possible hats.

ANT Board, staff members, officials and volunteers must be seen setting a sun smart example. During competitions they are encouraged to wear collared shirts, hats and where appropriate sunglasses.

Competition Procedures

Fluids

Athletics Northern Territory acknowledges and adheres to the IAAF Rule 144/4 but at the same time is mindful that we live in a tropical climate and that we have duty of care obligations to use common sense in provision of drinking stations.

It is recommended that athletes, ANT staff, officials and volunteers drink at least 7-8ml of fluid per Kg of body mass to diminish the risk of heat illness (about 500 ml for a 65 kg person). Fluid should be consumed no more than two hours before exercising to promote adequate hydration allow time for excretion of excess water. To aid in this process the following guidelines are strongly recommended:

1. There are to be number of water stations in and around the competition arena. They should be located at all field events, marshalling areas and the finish line.

2. The water supplied should be cooler than the ambient temperature as this will aid in the cooling process.
3. Additional water should be provided so as to allow participants to douse themselves and thereby assisting in the cooling process. E.g. Spray bottles, hoses and buckets etc.
4. In addition to water, diluted sports drinks, cordial and fruit juices should also be made available at the various competitions. Not only will this make the fluids more palatable to the younger participants but it will also be beneficial for replacing fluids, energy and electrolytes lost during exercise. It will delay the onset of exercise-induced exhaustion and hence aid in the prevention of heat stroke.

Shade

Shade should be provided at all field events, marshalling and finish areas. It should also be provided in other areas where participants, staff, officials and volunteers will be waiting for long periods of time unprotected from the sun.

In the case of away competitions, the team manager must organise suitable shading for athletes waiting to compete. It is the team manager's responsibility to organise, transport and erect this shade.

Sunscreen

Sunscreen should be provided by Clubs and ANT and located in and around the competition arena, preferably at the water stations. In doing this you are ensuring it is as convenient as possible for athletes, staff, officials, volunteers and spectators to use.

The sunscreen must be of the highest quality and meet all Australian standards.

Public Announcements

During competition public announcements will be made regularly reminding those at the event to keep drinking water and remain in the shade wherever possible.

This will not only help to keep fluid intake and sun safety high but also ensure the Association is discharging its duty of care to its members. In addition it will be a positive public relations tool for the Association. ANT and its Clubs will be seen as an organisation that is constantly considering the health and safety of its members, staff, volunteers and spectators.

Competition Schedule

It is strongly suggested that competition, wherever possible, be conducted in either the evenings or early mornings to avoid the heat.

If the above it is not possible, then during these hours, shorter events e.g. 100m and field events should be scheduled.

Middle distance events i.e. those 400m and over, are to be scheduled for the early and late stages of the competition.

APPENDIX A

Heat Exhaustion Dehydration can lead to Heat Exhaustion:

- Characterised by a high heart rate, dizziness, headache, loss of endurance/skill/confusion and nausea.
- The skin may still be cool/sweating, but there will be signs of developing vasoconstriction, eg. pale colour.
- Athletes will pass little urine, which will be highly concentrated.
- Cramps may be associated with dehydration.
- The rectal temperature may be up to 40C and the athlete may collapse on stopping activity.

These indicate that you should stop, drink more fluids and cool down. Seek medical treatment if these symptoms don't improve rapidly.

Also remember to keep an eye on your athlete or team mates who may not realise they are suffering from dehydration or heat stress.

Take extreme care if exercising for more than 30 minutes in very hot weather (more than 34 degrees Celsius)