

EXTREME WEATHER GUIDELINES

EXTREME TEMPERATURES

1. General

- 1.1 Children and adolescents are covered simultaneously by the recommendations in these guidelines.
- 1.2 It is recommended that if a large increase in temperature is likely to occur, parents and officials should take extra care to ensure athletes are sufficiently hydrated and shade is provided.
- 1.3 It is recommended that greater care be taken of athletes who are not fit or who are overweight, when exercising in high temperatures.

2. Education

- 2.1 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 Centres then it should be conducted at a more appropriate time.

3. Attire

- 3.1 All athletes should be wearing sun safe attire at competition days and whilst exposed to the sun (except when competing), hats or caps should also be worn.
- 3.2 All Board/Executive members, staff members, officials and volunteers must be seen setting a sun smart example. During competitions they are encouraged to wear collared shirts (over their competition uniform if necessary), hats and where appropriate sunglasses.

4. Sunscreen

- 4.1 Sunscreen should be provided either by the Club and located under the club tent or by the Centre and located in and around the competition arena. In doing so we are ensuring it is as convenient as possible for athletes, staff, officials and volunteers to be used.
- 4.2 The sunscreen must be of the highest quality and meet all Australian standards.

5. Shade

- 5.1 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.

6. Public Announcements

- 6.1 It is recommended that during competition, public announcements be regularly made reminding those at the event to keep drinking water, apply sunscreen 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/Centre is discharging its duty of care to its members. In addition it will be a positive public relations tool for Little Athletics. Little Athletics will be seen as an organisation that is constantly considering the health and safety of its members, staff, volunteers and spectators.

7. Fluids

- 7.1 It is recommended that each athlete, staff, official and volunteer take enough water with them when competing or officiating at an event.
- 7.2 It is recommended that athletes, staff, officials and volunteers drink at least 7-8ml of fluid per Kg of body mass to diminish the risk of heat illness (about 500ml for 65 kg person).
- 7.3 Children can stave off dehydration during 3 hours of exercise in 35°C heat if enough fluid is consumed.
- 7.4 Fluid should be given to be consumed at least two hours before exercising to promote adequate

hydration and allow time for excretion of excess water.

- 7.5 There should be number of water stations, in and around the competition arena. They should be located at all field events, marshalling areas and finish line.
- 7.6 The water supplied should be cooler than the ambient temperature, as this will aid in the cooling process
- 7.7 In addition to water, diluted sports drinks, cordial and fruit juices should also be made available at the centre canteen. Not only will this make the fluids more palatable to 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 the prevention of heat stroke.
- 7.8 Additional water should also 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.

8. Postponement/Cancellation

- 8.1 It is recommended that parents and officials use caution if athletes are exercising in ambient temperatures above 40°C for an extended period of time (more than 1 hour).
- 8.2 When children are exercising in the heat, parents and officials must also pay close attention to athletes doing intermittent events (jumps & throws) as well as continuous events.
- 8.3 It is recommended that events be called off if the ambient temperature goes above 40°C in terms of 8.1

Consideration should be given to postponing field events that span a considerable time.

Appendix A

What is heat injury?

Heat injury may present itself in varied forms, including cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

Heat Exhaustion

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

- High heart rate
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Loss of endurance/skill
- Confusion
- Nausea
- The skin may still be cool/sweating, but there will be signs of developing vasoconstriction, e.g. 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.

If an athlete is exhibiting signs of heat stress or heat exhaustion they should stop, drink more fluids and cool down. Remove the athletes from the field, lay the victim down in a cool place and give plenty of cool water. If the athlete is confused or unable to drink water seek medical help immediately.

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 still 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 include: -

- dry skin
- confusion
- collapsing

If an athlete is showing any symptoms of heat stroke take the following action:

- call a Doctor or Ambulance immediately
- remove from the field and lay the victim down in a cool place
- give cool water to drink if conscious
- cool the athlete by putting in a cool bath, shower or under hose, applying wrapping icepacks to the groin and armpits or use wet towels.
- maximize airflow over the athlete through the use of a fan or fan them with towels.

LIGHTNING

When thunderstorms threaten, the Competition Manager will assess the situation ensuring the safety of athletes, officials and spectators.

All athletes, officials and spectators where possible should be inside a safe shelter during a thunderstorm.

Lightning Facts

- All thunderstorms produce lightning and are dangerous.
- Lightning often strikes outside the area of heavy rain and may strike as far as fifteen kilometres from any rainfall.
- Any time thunder is heard, the storm is close enough to pose an immediate lightning threat to your location.
- When thunderstorms are in the area but not overhead, the lightning threat can still exist even when overhead it is sunny, not raining, or when clear sky is visible.
- Many lightning casualties occur before the thunder storm rains have moved into the area. This is often due to people not seeking shelter soon enough.
- Large numbers of casualties occur after the rain dissipates. This can be due to people being in too much of a hurry to go back outside and resume activities.

Emergency Action Plan

The Competition Manager will ensure lightning safety messages are read out over the PA system if thunderstorms are forecast or are imminent which will include:

- Criteria for suspension and resumption of activities.
- The location of safe shelters and the best access.

Safe structures and locations

The primary choices for shelter are the Glasshouse, Changerooms and Equipment Shed. If for some reason it is not possible to reach one of these buildings, then a fully enclosed vehicle with a metal roof and the windows completely closed is a reasonable alternative

Unsafe locations and situations

- Anywhere out on the park
- Close vicinity to the tallest structure in the area (e.g. trees, light poles, discus cages)
- Small structures such as rain/picnic shelters, tents.
- Use of electrical appliances
- Umbrellas or any object that increases a person's height

Criteria for suspension and resumption of activities

The sound of thunder will serve as an immediate warning of lightning danger. Generally speaking, if an individual can see lightning or hear thunder, they are already at risk.

The 30-30 rule

By the time the flash-to-bang count approaches 30 seconds, all individuals should already be inside a safe shelter.

- Wait at least 30 minutes after the last sound (thunder) or observation of lightning and ensure conditions are completely safe before leaving shelter to resume activities. Each time lightning is observed or thunder is heard, the 30 minute clock should be re-started.
- The National Lightning Safety Institute in the US recommends the saying: "If you can see it, flee it; if you can hear it, clear it".
- Follow your set criteria for the suspension and resumption of activities without exception.

First aid

Lightning victims do not carry an electrical charge, are safe to handle, and need immediate medical attention. Cardiac arrest is the immediate cause of death in lightning fatalities. Some deaths can be prevented if the victim receives the proper first aid:

- Call 000 at once
- Check the victim's pulse and breathing. Begin CPR if necessary.
- If possible, move the victim to a safe place.