



## **ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS POLICY**

**Adopted by NSW Netball Association Ltd Board Meeting on  
9<sup>th</sup> December 2015**

<b><i>Update</i></b>	<b><i>Comments</i></b>
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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

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Netball NSW recognises that adverse weather conditions present some level of risk that can harm the performance and/or health of participants. Activities that occur in adverse weather conditions can place participants at risk of injury, illness and in extreme circumstances, even death.

The health and safety of our members is a paramount concern of Netball NSW. As such to reduce the risk of injury, manage potentially dangerous weather situations and meet legal obligations for duty of care, Netball NSW aims to provide a safe environment for players, coaches, umpires, administrators, and spectators.

## **2. PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY**

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The purpose of this policy is to provide clear cancellation guidelines for event organisers and coordinators on the occasion of adverse weather conditions.

This policy document includes the following adverse weather procedures:

1. Hot weather
2. Wet weather
3. Lightning
4. Fire, smoke and haze

## **3. ORGANISATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

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- 3.1. Netball NSW reserves the right to cancel/postpone or alter an event in the interest of participant health and safety and as such has developed clear cancellation event organiser and coordinators. These guidelines aim to assist when managing events in adverse weather conditions and minimise the risk of injury and illness for all participants involved.
- 3.2 This Policy applies to all affiliated netball Associations of Netball NSW.

#### 4. DEFINITIONS

<b>Activity</b>	To encompass all Netball NSW organised events. Including but not limited to competitions, player camps, team selections, trainings, meetings, courses and presentations.
<b>Ambient Temperature</b>	Temperature of the surrounding air, not taking into account humidity or wind in the air.
<b>Dehydration</b>	Loss of body water and salts essential for normal body function. Excessive dehydration in a sporting environment may lead to heat exhaustion and heat stroke.
<b>Drizzle</b>	To rain gently in fine, mist like drops.
<b>Fog</b>	Condensed water vapour in cloudlike masses lying close to the ground and limiting visibility.
<b>Frost</b>	A deposit of miniature ice crystals formed when water vapour condenses at a temperature below freezing.
<b>Heat exhaustion</b>	A form of heat illness characterised by a high heart rate, dizziness, headache and loss of endurance/skill/confusion and nausea.
<b>Heat illness</b>	Occurs with high intensity activity that elevates the body temperature and/or prolonged exposure to hot weather.
<b>Heat stroke</b>	A form of heat illness with characteristics similar to heat exhaustion in conjunction with dry skin and confusion. Heat stroke may arise in a participant who has not been identified as suffering from heat exhaustion and has persisted in further activity.
<b>Intermittent</b>	Stopping and starting at intervals.
<b>Lightning</b>	A flash of light in the sky, occurring during a thunderstorm and caused by a discharge of electricity, either between clouds or between a cloud and the earth.
<b>Storm</b>	An atmospheric disturbance manifested in strong winds accompanied by rain, snow and/or other precipitation and often by thunder and lightning.
<b>Thunder</b>	The crashing or booming sound produced by rapidly expanding air along the path of the electrical discharge of lightning.
<b>Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT)</b>	Is a composite temperature used to estimate the effect of temperature, humidity, wind speed (wind chill, and visible and infrared radiation, usually sunlight) on humans. It is used by industrial hygienists, athletes and the military to determine approximate exposure levels to high temperature.
<b>30/30 Rule</b>	If it takes less than 30 seconds to hear thunder after seeing the flash, lightning is near enough to pose a threat; after the storm ends, wait 30 minutes before resuming outdoor activities.

## 5. HOT WEATHER PROCEDURES

- 5.1 Obtain an accurate temperature (both ambient and WBGT) from the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) [www.bom.gov.au/info/thermal\\_stress/index.shtml](http://www.bom.gov.au/info/thermal_stress/index.shtml), before assessing the severity of the conditions.
- 5.2 Assess the severity of the conditions by utilising the tables and information below. Ensure the recommended method of management is undertaken.
- 5.3 *Events involving children*

Children that are exposed to activities in warm, hot weather conditions increase their risk of heat illness. Children sweat less and experience less evaporative cooling than adults and consequently have a greater difficulty reducing core body temperature. Sports Medicine Australia recommends ambient temperature is the most effective way of evaluating risk of activities in hot weather for children.

The following table provides recommendations on the management of activities in hot, dry weather conditions for children. Once puberty is completed the Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) index applies.

Ambient Temperature C	Relative Humidity	Risk of Heat Illness	Recommended Management
15-20		Low	Caution over-motivation.
21-25	Exceeds 70%	Low-Moderate	Increase vigilance. Caution over-motivation.
26-30	Exceeds 60%	Moderate	Moderate early pre-season training. Reduce intensity and duration of play/training. Incorporate more rest and hydration breaks.
31-35	Exceeds 50%	High-Very High	Limit intensity and take more rest and hydration breaks. Limit duration to less than 60 minutes per session.
36 and above	Exceeds 30%	Extreme	Postpone games to cooler conditions or the cooler part of the day, shorten the game time OR cancel.

#### 5.4 Events involving adults

The most effective way of evaluating the risk of activities in hot weather for adults, is by measuring the Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) or obtaining information from the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM).

The following table provides recommendations on the management of activities in hot, humid weather conditions for adults and adolescents.

WBGT	Risk of Heat Illness	Recommended Management
Less than 20	Low	Caution over-motivation
21-25	Moderate-High	Caution over-motivation. Incorporate more rest and hydration breaks.
26-29	High-Very High	Limit intensity and take more rest and hydration breaks. Limit duration to less than 60 minutes per session – consider shortening the game time.
30 and above	Extreme	Postpone games to cooler conditions or cooler part of the day, shorten the game time OR cancel.

#### 5.5 When preparing for an event the following issues and strategies should also be considered:

- *Duration and intensity of the event* – strategies include reduced playing time; extended rest periods; provisions for extra water, wetting clothes and face; fan to enhance air flow and player/official rotation.
- *Conduct of the competition* – strategies include dividing games into shorter periods; longer breaks and alternative training times.
- *Time of the day* – strategies such as scheduling events outside the hottest part of the day should be considered.
- *Local environment* – considerations include radiant heat from surfaces and surface type; amount of sunlight on the surface; airflow and air conditioning within venues.

#### 5.6 Factors to consider in conjunction with the above tables include the following:

- *Fitness levels / athletic ability of participant* – An overweight and unconditioned participant will generally be more susceptible to heat illness.
- *Age and gender of participant* – Female participants may suffer more during activity in the heat, due to their greater percentage of body fat.
- *Veteran participants* – Generally more susceptible to heat illness due to reduced cardiac function.
- *Prior medical conditions* – It is important to be aware of the participants who have a medical condition or are taking medication that may predispose them to heat illness. Examples includes asthma, diabetes, pregnancy, heart conditions and epilepsy. Some medications and conditions may require special allowances. Any player that is experiencing a high temperature, viral infection, diarrhoea or vomiting should be excluded from participating due to increased risk of heat illness.
- *Heat waves* – Extra caution needs to be taken during unseasonal heat waves or unusually hot or humid climates, or if participants have travelled from a cooler area to a hot and humid climate.

#### 5.7 Refer to the *Netball NSW Sun Protection Policy* for further details regarding sun safe practices.

## 6. WET WEATHER PROCEDURES

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- 6.1 Prior to the event ensure a proactive approach and obtain details about local weather conditions from the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM), [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au)
- 6.2 Assess the severity of the conditions by utilising the table and information below. Ensure the recommended method of management is undertaken.

CONTINUE	CANCEL
Light drizzle.	Continuous driving rain (including hail).
Intermittent rain.	Activity surface is slippery due to excess water – when sweeping doesn't assist the surface.
Intermittent heavy rain.	Frost and/or ice on the activity surface.
Activity surface is wet or slippery – sweep away.	Heavy fog.
Water pooling or activity on surface – sweep away.	Snow (light or heavy).

## 7. LIGHTNING PROCEDURES

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- 7.1 Lightning can strike more than 10km from the edge of a thunderstorm and it is generally agreed that 10kms is the minimum safe distance from a storm.
- 7.2 Netball NSW supports the '30/30' rule which will be enacted for lightning safety and serves as a guide for event cancellation and subsequent resumption.
- 7.2.1 The '30/30' rule is not an absolute rule. A storm may move very quickly, or not generate any lightning or thunder until it is very close or topographical or wind conditions may prevent sound from travelling to your position. These conditions are especially common in mountain areas. It is important that staff/volunteers observe weather conditions and be alert to the possibility of the above occurring.
- 7.2.2 In the event of an approaching storm, count the seconds from when the lightning flash is seen to when the thunder is heard ('flash to bang count'). If there is a thunder occurrence within 30 seconds from when the lightning is observed, activity is to cease immediately. Participants are at risk and are to be advised to seek safe shelter to ensure safety.
- 7.2.3 Wait 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or lightning is seen before resuming activities. This will ensure the lightning storm is at least 20kms away from the venue.
- 7.3 Prior to the event ensure a proactive approach and obtain details about local weather conditions from the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM), [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au)
- 7.4 Event coordinators are to define a list of safe structures and locations to be utilised in the event of a lightning storm occurring.

7.5 Safe shelter includes:

- Large/substantial enclosed buildings;
- Fully enclosed metal vehicles with windows closed;
- Low ground;
- Trees of uniform height (i.e. forest)

7.6 Unsafe locations and situations:

- High, open ground;
- Swimming pools (both indoor and outdoor);
- Close vicinity to the tallest structure in the area – isolated or tall trees, light pole, communication towers;
- Near outdoor metal structures – rain shelters, tents, seating/benches, poles, gates and fences;
- Objects that increase an individual's height – umbrella.

## 8. FIRE, SMOKE AND HAZE PROCEDURES

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- 8.1 Prior to the event ensure a proactive approach and obtain details about local weather conditions from the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM), [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au)
- 8.2 In the event that weather conditions are conducive to the spread of dangerous bushfires BOM will issue Fire Weather Warnings within 24 hours of the potential onset of hazardous conditions. These warnings will also be broadcast on radio and television.
- 8.3 If prior warning is received on the potential onset of hazardous conditions, including bushfire, smoke and haze, Netball NSW may make a decision on whether the event is to be altered, cancelled or postponed to ensure the safety of participants.
- 8.4 If prior warning is not received and hazardous conditions are approaching ensure contact with the NSW Fire and Rescue Services and follow all instructions given.
- 8.5 If needed, venue evacuation will be handled by the appropriate venue representative. Netball NSW staff, upon direction, are required to direct evacuees to safe locations.

## 9. REFERENCES

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Netball Queensland – *Adverse Weather Conditions Policy*. Retrieved 10<sup>th</sup> November 2015 from Netball Queensland website: <http://qld.netball.com.au/resources-policies-guidelines/>

Sports Medicine Australia – *Hot Weather Guidelines For Sporting Clubs and Associations and the Physically Active*. Retrieved November 2015 from Sports Medicine Australia's website: <http://sma.org.au/resources-advice/policies-guidelines/>