



# **Netball NSW**

## Adverse Weather Conditions Policy

**Adopted by New South Wales Netball Association Ltd at its Board Meeting held on 22 June 2021**

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## 1 Introduction

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

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear guidelines for cancelling, postponing or modifying of a Netball Activity in the event of adverse weather conditions.

This policy document includes the following adverse weather guidelines for:

- a) Hot weather
- b) Wet weather
- c) Electrical storms
- d) Poor air quality

## 3 Organisational Responsibilities

3.1 Netball NSW reserves the right to cancel, postpone or modify a Netball NSW sanctioned Netball Activity due to adverse weather conditions in the interest of participant health and safety and as such has developed clear guidelines. These guidelines also aim to assist those managing local events in adverse weather conditions to prevent or minimise the risk of injury and illness for all participants involved.

3.2 This Policy applies to Netball NSW and all Affiliates of Netball NSW.

## 4 Definitions

**Affiliate** Means a Premier League Licensee, a Netball Association, or a Netball Club, howsoever described, whether incorporated, unincorporated, a company limited by guarantee, or otherwise, which is a member of Netball NSW.

**Air Temperature** Temperature of the surrounding air, measured in the shade, and not taking into account humidity or wind in the air.

**Dehydration** 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>	Medical conditions which occur as a result of high intensity activity that elevates the body temperature and/or prolonged exposure to hot weather. Characterised by nausea, dizziness, vomiting and syncope.
<b>Heat stroke</b>	A form of heat illness with characteristics similar to heat exhaustion in conjunction with dry skin, confusion and in some cases collapse. 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>Match Official</b>	For the purpose of this policy a Match Official is a person responsible for the planning, organising and/or management of a competition or Netball Activity and may include, but not limited to, Netball NSW Staff, Affiliate Executive, Umpires.
<b>Netball Activity</b>	Means any Netball Competitions, matches, training and or events organized, controlled or sanctioned by Netball NSW and / or its Affiliates.
<b>Relative Humidity</b>	The percentage ratio of vapour pressure to saturation vapour pressure which is a commonly used indicator of the amount of moisture in the air.
<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.

### Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT)

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.

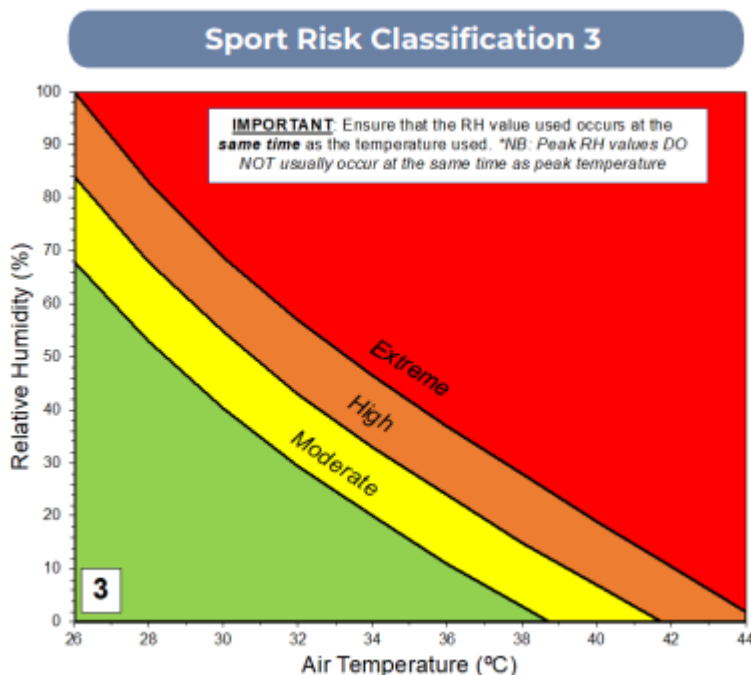
### 30/30 Rule

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

### 5.1 Match Official should:

- a) Obtain an accurate temperature (both Air Temperature and WBGT) and Relative Humidity from the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM), (see: [Thermal Comfort Observations for New South Wales \(bom.gov.au\)](https://www.bom.gov.au)) to assist in assessing the potentially adverse weather conditions. Those with their own WBGT should take their own readings. Readings taken inside an indoor location will help to provide a more accurate assessment of the conditions.
- b) Using this information, identify the relevant risk level per the below table:



- c) Use the tables and information in clauses 5.2 and 5.3 to identify and follow the appropriate method of risk management depending on whether conditions are hot and dry or hot and humid.

## 5.2 Hot, Dry Weather Conditions (Indoor and Outside facilities)

The following table provides recommendations on the management of activities in hot, dry weather conditions depending on the risk level identified at 5.1 above as follows:

- a) GREEN: Low Risk
- b) YELLOW: Moderate Risk
- c) ORANGE: High Risk
- d) RED: Extreme Risk

Risk of Heat Illness	Recommended Management
Low	Heat Illness can occur. Caution over-motivation.
Low-Moderate	Increase vigilance. Caution over-motivation. Encourage participants to drink regularly before, during and after exercise
Moderate	Moderate early pre-season training. Reduce intensity and duration of play/training. Increase the frequency and/or duration of hydration breaks (provide a minimum of 15 minutes rest for every 45 minutes of activity).
High-Very High	Limit intensity and take more rest and hydration breaks. Extend scheduled quarter time breaks. Employ active cooling strategies where available (e.g. provide sponges, spray bottles, ice packs, damp towels, fans etc.) Limit duration to less than 60 minutes per session.
Extreme	Postpone games to cooler conditions or the cooler part of the day, shorten the game time OR cancel.

## 5.3 Hot, Humid Weather Conditions (Indoor and Outdoor facilities).

The most effective way of evaluating the risk of activities in hot, humid weather is by measuring the WBGT or obtaining information from the BOM (see: [Thermal Comfort Observations for New South Wales \(bom.gov.au\)](http://www.bom.gov.au))

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

WBGT	Risk of Heat Illness	Recommended Management
Less than 20	Low	Heat Illness can occur. 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, modify/shorten the game time OR cancel.

#### 5.4 Catastrophic Fire Danger

In the event that a competition or Netball Activity is scheduled to take place on a day in an area subject to a “Catastrophic” Bush Fire Danger Rating issued by the NSW Rural Fire Service all netball related activities within the area affected by the Catastrophic rating must be postponed/cancelled.

#### 5.5 When preparing for a competition or Netball Activity the following issues and strategies should also be considered:

- a) *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.
- b) *Conduct of the competition* – strategies include dividing games into shorter periods; longer breaks and alternative training times.
- c) *Time of the day* – strategies such as scheduling events outside the hottest part of the day should be considered.
- d) *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:

- a) *Fitness levels / athletic ability of participant* – An overweight and unconditioned participant will generally be more susceptible to heat illness.
- b) *Age and gender of participant* – Female participants may suffer more during activity in the heat, due to their greater percentage of body fat.
- c) *Veteran participants* – Generally more susceptible to heat illness due to reduced cardiac function.
- d) *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.
- e) *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 For more information on recognising signs and symptoms of heat-related illness and treatment methods refer to the Sports Medicine Australia Extreme Heat Policy which is accessible at the following link: [SMA-Extreme-Heat-Policy-2021-Final.pdf](#).

## 6 Sun Protection

- 6.1 Match Officials, participants and spectators are encouraged to access the **SunSmart UV Alert** to view local UV levels. The **SunSmart UV Alert** can be accessed at [www.cancercouncil.com.au](http://www.cancercouncil.com.au).
- 6.2 Netball NSW and Associations will use wherever possible a combination of the recommended sun protection practices outlined below;
- a) **SLIP** on clothing that covers as much skin as possible during training sessions and in-between times during play. Grab a cool, light shirt made of densely woven fabric (preferably rated UPF50+) to pop-on when off the court.
  - b) Netball uniforms don't typically provide much coverage so it's important to **SLOP** on SPF30 (or higher) broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen to any exposed skin at least 20 minutes before play starts. Look for a dry touch or active formula that won't be greasy for easy ball handling. Sunscreen should be reapplied regularly if you're working up a sweat (or at least every two hours), so put a tube in your sports bag for later. Hydration breaks and half-time provide the perfect opportunities to reapply.
  - c) **SLAP** on a wide-brimmed hat when you are off court to protect your face, neck and ears from the constant UV.
  - d) **SEEK SHADE**: Whether you are practising, warming-up or playing, take advantage of shady breaks whenever you can. Hydrate in the shade and find shady spots when off the court. Try to schedule training and games earlier in the morning or later in the day when the sun's UV isn't as intense.
  - e) **SLIDE ON SUNGLASSES**: Outdoor netball courts can reflect high levels of UV. Bring sunglasses to protect the eyes and cut the glare to make sure you never miss any of the court action from the sidelines. For best protection, look for wrap-around sunglasses which meet the Australian Standard (AS/NZS 1067).
- 6.3 Netball NSW and Associations will increase the awareness of sun safety by regularly promoting sun protection information to members via communication means. Examples include: notice boards, newsletters, online communications, announcements at event and competitions.

## 7 Cold Weather

- 7.1 Children and young people (in particular thin/lean children) are also susceptible to illness in cold weather as they lose body heat more easily. Physical activity is one of the best ways to stay warm in a cold environment. However, coaches, parents and Match Officials should pay particular attention to children and young people playing sports or activities subject to cold and wet conditions because water increases the loss of body heat.
- 7.2 Have some flexibility from competition rules about clothing to allow children and young people to feel more comfortable in extremely cold weather. This includes allowing tracksuit pants in cold weather, even if not part of regulation uniform.



## 8 Wet Weather

- 8.1 Match Officials should, prior to the match or Netball Activity, ensure a proactive approach and obtain details about local weather conditions from the BOM, [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au).
- 8.2 Assess the severity of the conditions by utilising the table and information below. Ensure the recommended method of management is followed.

CONTINUE/MODIFY	CANCEL/POSTPONE/MODIFY
Light drizzle.	Continuous driving rain (including hail).
Intermittent rain.	Court surface is slippery due to excess water – and sweeping doesn't assist the court surface.
Intermittent heavy rain.	Frost and/or ice on the court surface.
Court surface is wet.	Heavy fog.
Water pooling on court surface but can be swept away.	Snow (light or heavy).

Options for modification (where appropriate) may include introducing additional breaks to allow for more opportunities to dry courts, reducing the number of players on court or reducing playing time.

### 8.3 Court surface (Outdoor Venue)

In rain, hail, snow or fog, court conditions should be assessed by Match Officials prior to the commencement of play. If there are several games to be played, an ongoing assessment should be undertaken between games to ensure the safety of players, umpires and team officials. If the weather deteriorates during a game, a further assessment may be made mid game.

Section 9.3 (iii) of the INF Rules of Netball allows for the umpire to consult with event organisers to decide if the game/s should be abandoned.

Factors to consider when assessing the court surface;

- a) Is the court/s slippery
- b) Is there snow or hail on the court/s
- c) Is water pooling on the court/s surface that can't be swept off

- 8.4 Once the assessment is complete a decision should be made to commence/continue play or cancel, postpone or modify the match or Netball Activity.

## 9 Electrical Storms

- 9.1 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

- 9.2 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. The 30/30 rule is the recommended approach supported by the Centre for Sports Medicine Research and Education at the University of Melbourne.
- 9.3 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. Wind conditions may also prevent sound from travelling to your position. These conditions are especially common in mountain areas. It is important that Match Officials observe weather conditions and be alert to the possibility of the above occurring.
- 9.4 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.
- 9.5 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.
- 9.6 Prior to the match or Netball Activity Match Officials should obtain details about local weather conditions from the BOM, [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au).
- 9.7 Match Officials are to define a list of safe structures and locations to be utilised in the event of a lightning storm occurring.
- 9.8 Safe shelter includes:
- a) Large/substantial enclosed buildings;
  - b) Fully enclosed metal vehicles with windows closed;
  - c) Low ground;
  - d) Trees of uniform height (i.e. forest)
- 9.9 Unsafe locations and situations:
- a) High, open ground;
  - b) Swimming pools (both indoor and outdoor);
  - c) Close vicinity to the tallest structure in the area – isolated or tall trees, light pole, communication towers;
  - d) Near outdoor metal structures – rain shelters, tents, seating/benches, poles, gates and fences;
  - e) Objects that increase an individual's height – umbrella.

## **10 Poor Air Quality (Smoke and other hazards)**

- 10.1 Prior to a match or Netball Activity Match Officials should obtain details about local weather conditions from the BOM, [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au).
- 10.2 In the event of poor air quality, Netball NSW recommends that the following steps are taken;

- a) Go to Current Air Quality website  
([www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/air/current-air-quality](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/air/current-air-quality))
- b) On the map find the area nearest to the venue location and click on the box that shows the current reading (i.e. visibility, particles)
- c) A list of areas and suburbs will appear. In the list scroll down to the nearest suburb or area to the venue location
- d) The last columns on the right show the latest air quality readings for the area or the suburb selected.

*(Note: PM 10 = coarse particles e.g. dust and ash. PM2.5 = fine particles e.g. smoke.)*

- 10.3 Where the air quality readings are fair (67-99) or poor (100-149) it is recommended that consideration be given by Match Officials to suspend or cancel the match or Netball Activity, or modify such until the air quality improves.
- 10.4 Where the air quality readings are very poor (150-299) or hazardous (200+) it is recommended Match Officials suspend or cancel the match or Netball Activity until the air quality improves.
- 10.5 Consideration should be based on information obtained from the Current Air Quality website and a local assessment of conditions including indoor venues.
- 10.6 Where a decision is made to continue a match or Netball Activity with readings that are fair to hazardous, warnings should be issued to officials, players, and all involved in the match or Netball Activity at the venue or on an associated website/social media platform, or both. The warning should provide information that current conditions may pose a health hazard, particularly to those with respiratory or cardiovascular conditions and they should make their own decision in regard to participating.
- 10.7 Further information and a number of Air Quality Fact Sheets are available on the NSW Health website: [www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/air/Pages/aqi.aspx](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/air/Pages/aqi.aspx)

## 11 References

SPORTS MEDICINE AUSTRALIA

*The New Sports Medicine Australia (SMA) Extreme Heat Policy*, Sports Medicine Australia, February 2021, accessed 10 March 2021

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