



## **POLICY – Adverse Weather Conditions**

### **Purpose and Background**

Netball Queensland recognises that adverse weather conditions present some level of risk that can harm the performance and/or the 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 Queensland. As such to reduce the risk of injury, manage potentially dangerous weather situations and meet legal obligations for duty of care, Netball Queensland aims to provide a safe environment for players, coaches, umpires, administrators, and spectators. 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

### **Policy Statement**

Netball Queensland reserves the right to cancel/postpone or alter an event in the interest of participant health and safety as such has developed clear cancellation guidelines for event organisers 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.

### **Applicability**

This policy applies to all participants of Netball Queensland Events including but not limited to, players, umpires, team officials, volunteers, spectators and staff.

### **Definitions**

**Activity** – To encompass all Netball Queensland organised events. Including but not limited to Competitions, Player Camps, Team Selections, Trainings, Meetings, Courses and Presentations.

**Adult/ Adolescent:** A post-pubescent participant



**Ambient Temperature:** Temperature of the surrounding air, not taking into account humidity or wind in the air

**Child:** A pre-pubescent participant

**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.

**Drizzle** – To rain gently in fine, mist like drops

**Fog** - Condensed water vapour in cloudlike masses lying close to the ground and limiting visibility

**Frost** - A deposit of minute ice crystals formed when water vapour condenses at a temperature below freezing

**Heat exhaustion:** A form of heat illness characterised by a high heart rate, dizziness, headache, loss of endurance/skill/confusion and nausea

**Heat Illness:** Occurs with high intensity activity that elevates body temperature and/or prolonged exposure to hot weather

**Heat stroke** – 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

**Intermittent** – Stopping and starting at intervals

**Lightning** - 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

**Storm** - An atmospheric disturbance manifested in strong winds accompanied by rain, snow, or other precipitation and often by thunder and lightning

**Thunder** - The crashing or booming sound produced by rapidly expanding air along the path of the electrical discharge of lightning

**Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT)** – A composite temperature that is used to estimate the effect of temperature, humidity, wind speed and radiation on humans

#### **Legislative Requirements**

Not Applicable

#### **Procedure**

Prior to the commencement of Netball Queensland events and activities a Weather Panel is to be formed. This panel is to consist of three (3) members who shall be selected at the commencement of each event.

With the guidance of the procedures listed below the Weather Panel have the authority to ensure a decision is made in regards to the management of adverse weather conditions in order to ensure the safety of all participants. Decisions may be reviewed in light of changes of weather conditions.

### **1. Hot Weather**



Step 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.

Step 2 – Assess the severity of the conditions by utilising the tables and information below. Ensure the recommended method of management is undertaken.

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.

### HOT DRY CONDITIONS

The following table provides recommendations on the management of activities in hot, **dry** weather conditions for adults, adolescents and children

Ambient temperature °C	Relative humidity	Risk of Heat Illness	Recommended management
15-20		Low	Heat illness can occur with long duration activities e.g. long distance running. Little risk in game/training situation for netball. Increase vigilance as temperature rises.
21-25	Exceeds 70%	Low- Moderate	Increase vigilance as temperature rises
26-30	Exceeds 60%	Moderate- High	When required reduce duration of play/training Where required incorporate more rest and hydration breaks Consider player rest and rotation
31-35	Exceeds 50%	High- very High	When required incorporate an addition rest/hydration break at the half way point of every quarter Consider player rest and rotation
36 and above	Exceeds 30%	Extreme	When possible postpone games to cooler conditions or cooler part of the day, avoid scheduling games during the hottest part of the day – between 11am and 3pm OR Cancel

### HOT HUMID CONDITIONS

The following table provides recommendations on the management of activities in hot, **humid** weather conditions for adults and adolescents and children. Wet Bulb Globe Temperature is only obtained from the Bureau of Meteorology or from a dedicated Wet Bulb Thermometer. If in doubt, use ambient air temperature (table above).



WGBT	Risk of Heat Illness	Recommended management
Less than 20	Low	Heat illness can occur in prolonged duration activity e.g. long distance running. Increase vigilance as temperature rises.
21-25	Moderate- High	Where required incorporate more rest and hydration breaks Consider player rest and rotation
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	Where possible postpone games to cooler conditions or cooler part of the day, avoid scheduling games during the hottest part of the day – between 11am and 3pm OR Cancel

Commented [RM1]: SMA recommend cancelling the game, not shortening it.

NB: Whilst an air conditioned indoor venue provides less of a problem, a hot indoor or outside venue, without shaded areas, is likely to become an inappropriate environment for playing and air flow should be considered.

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.
- *Children are more susceptible to heat illness* as they have less ability to sweat and effectively cool their body.
- *Veteran participants* - Generally more susceptible to heat illness due to reduced cardiac function
- *Surface Type* - A solid, black asphalt court area in direct sunlight will retain heat. Surface type and amount of direct sunlight will vary from facility to facility.
- *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 include 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.
- *Level of acclimatization* e.g. players from Tasmania will be more at risk of heat illness than those from North Queensland, due to their lack of acclimatisation to heat and humid conditions.

## 2. Wet Weather

Step 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/).

Step 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 on activity surface – sweep away	Snow (light or heavy)

### 3. Lightning

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. Consequently Netball Queensland supports the '30/30' rule which will be enacted for lightning safety and serves as a guide for event cancellation and subsequent resumption. Below are the cancellation guidelines Netball Queensland will adhere to ensure the safety of participants in the event of lightning.

Step 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/).

Step 2 – Event Coordinators are to define a list of safe structures and locations to be utilised in the event of a lightning storm occurring.

Safe shelter includes:

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

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

Step 3 – 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'). When the count reaches 30 seconds, activity is to cease immediately. Participants are at risk and are to be advised to seek safe shelter to ensure safety.

Step 4 - 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 20 kms away from the venue.



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 traveling to your position. These conditions are especially common in mountain areas. It is important that staff observe weather conditions and be alert to the possibility of the above occurring.

#### **4. Fire, Smoke and Haze**

Step 1 - Prior to the event ensure details about local weather conditions are sourced from the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM), [www.bom.gov.au/](http://www.bom.gov.au/). 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 are also broadcast on radio and television.

Step 2 – If prior warning is received on the potential onset of hazardous conditions, including bushfire, smoke and haze, the Event Weather Panel are to convene and make a decision on whether the event is to be altered, cancelled or postponed to ensure safety of participants.

Step 3 – If prior warning is not received and hazardous conditions are approaching ensure contact with the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service and follow all instructions given.

Step 4 – If needed, venue evacuation will be handled by the appropriate venue representative. Netball Queensland staff, upon direction, are required to direct evacuees to safe locations.

#### **Related Documents**

Adverse Weather Conditions Checklist (see below)

#### **References**

Makdissi, M., & Brunkner, P. (2002). Recommendations for Lightning Protection in Sport. *The Medical Journal of Australia*, 35-37.

Sports Medicine Australia. (n.d.). *Hot Weather Guidelines- For Sporting Clubs and Association and the Physically Active*. Retrived January, 10, 2013, from Sports Medicine Australia's Website: <http://sma.org.au/resources/policies/hot-weather/>





## NETBALL QUEENSLAND ADVERSE WEATHER POLICY– CHECK LIST

DATE:.....

EVENT ORGANISER:.....

Action Item	Yes/No
<b>EVENT MANAGEMENT</b>	
Prior to the commencement of the event the Weather Panel members are appointed and participants are notified of the selection of members	
Obtain details about predicted local weather conditions from the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) including ambient temperature, WBGT, hazardous conditions – storms, thunder, lightning and fires	
Obtain evacuation procedure of the activity venue	
First aid officials, venue representatives and all other relevant persons are aware of Netball Queensland Adverse Weather Policy	
<b>VENUE</b>	
Adequate water available and accessible to all participants	
Ice and ice packs available and accessible to all participants – for purchase and for medical needs	
Portable fans/air conditioners available, where required	
Promotion of fluid intake in hot weather	
Appropriate broom or squeegee available that can be utilised in the event of water pooling on an activity surface	
Adequate safe areas/shelter identified for number of participants in attendance in the event of wet weather	
Ensure all event staff are aware of the evacuation procedure for the venue	
<b>ISSUE IDENTIFIED</b>	
If incident occurs due to adverse weather conditions, ensure adequate medical care is provided and person(s) monitored	
If incident occurs due to adverse weather conditions, ensure an Incident Report Form completed and retained	
Refer to Netball Queensland Adverse Weather Policy, and consult with relevant persons to assess the situation	
Have all measures been taken to rectify the issue?	
If no to above, additional measures to alleviate issues in venue are to be actioned immediately	
If conditions do not improve from initial incident/report and all action has been taken to rectify the situation the Weather Panel is convened to determine details for postponement and rescheduling of games	
Advise relevant participants of cancellation/postponement	

NB: This check list is not exhaustive and can be enhanced to cater for specific events

