

POLICY DOCUMENT

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1. INTRODUCTION

Netball ACT 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 ACT. To reduce the risk of injury, manage potentially dangerous weather situations and meet legal obligations for duty of care, Netball ACT aims to provide a safe environment for players, coaches, umpires, administrators, and spectators.

2. PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

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

2.2 This policy document includes the following adverse weather procedures:

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

3. ORGANISATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Netball ACT reserves the right to cancel, postpone or modify a NACT run event 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 minimise the risk of injury and illness for all participants involved.

4. DEFINITIONS

<i>“Associated Activity”</i>	To encompass all Netball ACT organised events. Including but not limited to competitions, player camps, team selections, trainings, meetings, courses and presentations.
<i>“Ambient Temperature”</i>	Temperature of the surrounding air, not taking into account humidity or wind in the air.
<i>“Dehydration”</i>	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.
<i>“Drizzle”</i>	To rain gently in fine, mist like drops.
<i>“Fog”</i>	Condensed water vapour in cloudlike masses lying close to the ground and limiting visibility.
<i>“Frost”</i>	A deposit of miniature ice crystals formed when water vapour condenses at a temperature below freezing.
<i>“Heat exhaustion”</i>	A form of heat illness characterised by a high heart rate, dizziness, headache and loss of endurance/skill/confusion and nausea.
<i>“Heat illness”</i>	Occurs with high intensity activity that elevates the 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 and/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)”	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.
“Match Official”	For the purpose of this policy a match official is a person responsible for the planning, organising and/or management of a competition or associated activity and may include, but not limited to, NACT Staff or Association Executive.

5. HOT WEATHER

- 5.1 Obtain an accurate temperature (both ambient and WBGT) from the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) http://www.bom.gov.au/info/thermal_stress/index.shtml, before assessing the severity of the conditions. Those with their own WBGT are advised to take their own readings. Readings taken inside an indoor location will help to provide a more accurate assessment 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 followed
- 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.
- 5.4 Hot, Dry Weather Conditions (Indoor and Outdoor facilities)
The following table provides recommendations on the management of activities in hot, dry weather conditions.

Ambient Temperature C	Relative Humidity	Risk of Heat Illness	Recommended Management
15-20		Low	Heat Illness can occur. 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.

5.5 Catastrophic Fire Danger

In the event of a day receiving a catastrophic fire danger rating it is strongly recommended all netball related activities within the catastrophic fire danger area be postponed/cancelled.

5.6 When preparing for a competition or associated activity 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.

5.7 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.

6. RECOMMENDED SUN SAFE PRACTICES

6.1 Scheduling of outdoor netball activities

- a) Where possible, schedule outdoor events, competitions and / or training times outside the peak UV times of 10 am – 2 pm (11am – 3pm daylight savings time).
- b) Investigate the feasibility of having evening training sessions, competitions and events.

6.2 Shade

- a) Where possible, hold training sessions and competitions at venues that provide adequate shade.
- b) Encourage participants, officials and spectators to use the shade available, and encourage people to bring their own umbrellas and shade tents.

6.3 Hats

- a) Ensure that officials are provided with or encouraged to wear sun-safe hats that protect the face, neck and ears when possible. Recommended sun-safe hats include legionnaire, board-brimmed and bucket hats. Baseball hats or visors do not provide adequate sun protection.
- b) Encourage participants to bring hats to play that comply with Association policy and/or by laws.

6.4 Clothing

- a) Ensure that officials and participants are provided with or encouraged to wear sun-safe clothing that covers as much skin as possible. For officials this may include shirts / tops with longer sleeves and a collar, and long shorts or pants.
- b) Incorporate clothing that is cool and loose fitting. Any fabric with an ultraviolet protection actor (UPF) rating above 15 provides good protection against UV radiation, but UPF50+ is recommended.

6.5 Sunscreen

- a) Sunscreen should be made available that is at least SPF30+, broad spectrum and water-resistant and participants, coaches, officials and spectators are encouraged to use it appropriately.
- b) Promote the use of sunscreen that is applied at least 20 minutes before going outdoors, and is reapplied every 2 hours when outdoors, or after getting wet or perspiring.

6.6 Sunglasses

- a) Encourage members to wear close fitting, wraparound sunglasses that cover as much of the eye area as possible and that comply with Australian Standard AS/NZS 1067:2003 (Category 2, 3 or 4).

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 Prior to a match or associated activity, ensure a proactive approach and obtain details about local weather conditions from the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM), <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 or slippery.	Heavy fog.
Water pooling on court surface but can be swept away.	Snow (light or heavy).

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;

- Is the court/s slippery
- Is there snow or hail on the court/s
- Is water pooling on the court/s surface that can't be swept of

8.4 Once the assessment is complete a decision should be made to commence/continue play or cancel, postpone or modify the match or associated 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 ACT supports the '30/30' rule which will be enacted for lightning safety and serves as a guide for event cancellation and subsequent resumption.

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 or wind conditions may 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 associated activity ensure a proactive approach and obtain details about local weather conditions from the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM), 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:
- Large/substantial enclosed buildings;
 - Fully enclosed metal vehicles with windows closed;
 - Low ground;
 - Trees of uniform height (i.e. forest)
- 9.9 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.

10. POOR AIR QUALITY

- 10.1 Prior to the match or associated activity ensure a proactive approach and obtain details about local weather conditions from the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM), www.bom.gov.au
- 10.2 In the event of poor air quality, Netball ACT recommends that the following steps are taken;
- Go to Current Air Quality website (<https://www.health.act.gov.au/about-our-health-system/population-health/environmental-monitoring/monitoring-and-regulating-air-0>)
 - On the website find the area nearest to the venue location
 - Review the PM2.5 concentration and Health advisory ratings
- 10.3 The following table provides recommendations on the management of activities in air quality conditions;

Exercise Category	General Recommendations	Exercise Specific Recommendations	PM2.5 ug/m ³
Good to exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is a good day to be outside 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All forms of exercise are encouraged. 	<25
Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The air is probably smoky. Sensitive groups may experience symptoms like 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you are sensitive to air pollution, you may need to reduce prolonged high intensity endurance 	25-50

	<p>coughing or shortness of breath.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are sensitive to air pollution, spend less time outside in the smoke or dust and follow your treatment plan. • If you are worried about your symptoms, seek medical advice. 	<p>exercise (e.g. rowing, cycling, long-distance running).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most individuals will tolerate exercise as normal, without symptoms. 	
Poor conditions for exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The air is probably very smoky. • Sensitive groups and/or others may experience symptoms like coughing or shortness of breath. • If you are sensitive to air pollution, spend less time outside in the smoke or dust and follow your treatment plan. • If you are worried about your symptoms, seek medical advice. • Seek urgent medical help if anyone has trouble breathing or tightness in the chest. Call 000 for an ambulance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider reducing prolonged high intensity endurance activities (e.g. rowing, cycling, long-distance running). • If you are sensitive to air pollution, avoid prolonged high intensity endurance exercise (e.g. rowing, cycling, long-distance running) or move it indoors. • Intermittent exercise (e.g. tennis, netball, beach volleyball, cricket) and power activities (e.g. sprint training, javelin training, jump training, rugby skills training) may still be well-tolerated but athletes should be alert to symptoms. • Increase rest-to-activity ratio for intermittent exercise. 	51 - 100
Very poor conditions for exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The air is probably very smoky. • Sensitive groups and/or others may experience symptoms like coughing or shortness of breath. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High intensity endurance activities (e.g. rowing, cycling, long-distance running) should be avoided or moved indoors. • Intermittent exercise (e.g. tennis, netball, 	101 - 150

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are sensitive to air pollution, spend less time outside in the smoke or dust and follow your treatment plan. • If you are worried about your symptoms, seek medical advice. • Seek urgent medical help if anyone has trouble breathing or tightness in the chest. Call 000 for an ambulance. 	<p>beach volleyball, cricket) and power activities (e.g. sprint training, javelin training, jump training, rugby skills training) may still be well-tolerated but athletes should be alert to symptoms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase rest-to-activity ratio for intermittent exercise. • Any individual may be affected by exercising in smoky air at these levels. If symptoms develop, cease exercise and move indoors. 	
Likely to be hazardous to exercise outdoors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The air is probably extremely smoky. Everyone will be at risk of experiencing symptoms like coughing or shortness of breath. • Listen to your local emergency radio station or visit your State Emergency Agency for advice. • Stay indoors away from smoke and dust. • If you are sensitive to air pollution, follow your treatment plan. Close your windows and doors to keep smoke and dust out of your home. • If you think the air in your home is uncomfortable, consider going to an air-conditioned building like a library or shopping centre for a break if it's safe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most individuals should avoid physical activity outdoors. • Where there is an intention to play organised high-level sport and there are medical staff on site to advise, these levels of pollution should trigger a discussion between medical staff and officials about the advisability or otherwise of proceeding with the event. 	>150

	<p>to do so.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are worried about your symptoms, seek medical advice. • Seek urgent medical help if anyone has trouble breathing or tightness in the chest. Call 000 for an ambulance. 		
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10.4 Where a decision is made to continue a match or associated activity with readings that are fair to hazardous, warnings should be issued to officials, players, and all involved in the match or associated 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.

Further information and a number of Air Quality Fact Sheets are available on the ACT Health website:

<https://www.health.act.gov.au/about-our-health-system/population-health/environmental-monitoring/monitoring-and-regulating-air-5>

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

11 REFERENCES

ACT GOVERNMENT HEALTH, Health advice for smoky air (PM2.5), accessed 20 February 2020, <https://www.health.act.gov.au/about-our-health-system/population-health/environmental-monitoring/monitoring-and-regulating-air-0>

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