

CSNSW Sport
Adverse Weather Conditions Guide

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Document Authorisation

Name	Signature	Date
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Policy Ownership

The CSNSW Sport department is responsible for the development and update of this policy.

Policy Location

This policy is located on the CSNSW Website and on Complispace

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Introduction

Catholic Schools NSW operates many outdoor sporting activities that may be affected by adverse weather conditions. As such, with the duty of care and safety of all participants in mind, CSNSW Sport offers the following guidance to organisers, be they Catholic schools, sporting associations, dioceses or teachers and students, for dealing with various adverse weather conditions.

The safety of players, staff, and spectators shall be the primary concern of any officials. Events should not commence, or continue, if there is a foreseeable risk occurring to any player, official or spectator.

The identified adverse weather conditions are:

- Lightning and storms
- Extreme Heat
- Air Quality

Prior To Activity

Regardless of the type of activity (this includes selections and training, not just competition), the following checks should be made:

1. Check weather forecasts for likely thunderstorms on the BOM website

<http://www.bom.gov.au/>

2. Closely monitor forecasts in the days and hours leading up to the event and take note of any warnings posted, particularly where the possibility of adverse weather conditions is forecast.

3. Consider informing participants ahead of the event that it may be disrupted due to adverse weather conditions if there is a possibility of adverse weather conditions.

4. Should the organiser/convener be aware of a forecast which contains the likelihood of adverse weather conditions on the date of the event the organiser/convener should consider the following;

- i) A decision for cancellation or rescheduling of the event should ideally be made no less than 48 hours before the scheduled date.
- ii) If the adverse weather conditions occur within the 48 hours preceding the event, the organiser/convener should turn their attention to how the event can continue in a safe manner. In this instance, every effort will be made to conduct the selections in a modified format or venue, notifying participants of this as soon as mitigating arrangements have been decided.
- iii) Whilst all attempts to continue with the event shall be considered, should adverse weather conditions deteriorate either on the date of the event or within 48 hours from the event to an extent where it is unsafe to proceed with the event in a mitigated form, the organiser/convener has the authority to prioritise the health and safety of the participants and announce a cancellation or rescheduling of the event.

On the day of Activity

1. Physically monitor the surroundings for indications of the onset of adverse weather conditions. These checks are particularly important when planning and undertaking activities involving large numbers of people.
2. Where there is a forecast or sighting of adverse weather conditions, increased awareness and monitoring of risk should continue until the event has finished.
3. The decision to delay or suspend an event as well as resume play will be made by the ground manager/convener based on
 - (a) information obtained from the BOM website
 - (b) physical observations
 - (c) discussions with, in the first instance, CSNSW Sport representative then the match officials
4. It should also be noted that at all times, the ground manager/convener retains the authority to stop an event.

Specific Weather Events

Lightning

CSNSW Sport endorses the “30/30 guidelines” with respect to lightning events where they occur within the context of any CSNSW Sport activity. The threat to personal safety is greatest if a person is outdoors when a thunderstorm is local. Where there is a forecast or sighting of thunderstorm activity, increased awareness and monitoring of lightning risk should continue until the event has finished. Expert consensus considers that a safe distance from lightning is more than 10km. Therefore, when lightning is within 10km, appropriate shelter should be sought. In the absence of specific information from a weather radar or specialised lightning warning device, the 30/30 Guideline (described in further detail below) should be used.

It should also be noted that lightning may be obscured by clouds. If thunder is heard, you should assume lightning is in the vicinity. Similarly, just because there are blue skies overhead, does not mean that the danger has passed. Careful judgment must always be used to determine whether a threat exists. If in doubt, stop outdoor activities and seek safety under an appropriate shelter.

Prediction of Lightning at Start of Event

If lightning is predicted within 10km of the event venue at the scheduled starting time, consideration should be given to delaying the commencement time of the match or event.

The 30/30 Lightning Safety Guidelines

The 30/30 Guideline deals with stoppages due to lightning risk and resumption of activity once the risk has subsided and operates in two parts;

Part 1 – Stopping the activity

If the time between seeing a lightning flash and hearing a thunder clap **is less than 30 seconds**, the organiser should consider that the thunderstorm is within 10km (as sound travels at approximately 340m per second) and immediately stop all outdoor activity. Individuals should seek appropriate shelter. Ideally, this would be indoors in an enclosed building. If an enclosed building is unavailable, and if it is safe to do so, taking shelter in an enclosed car is another example of appropriate shelter.

Individuals should avoid sheltering under a tree (or group of trees) in the open or in small open structures such as picnic shelters. This is because many pavilions/shelters have frames made out of conductive materials.

If there is no appropriate shelter available, the organiser/convener should consider what is the most effective way for individuals to evacuate the area.

Part 2 – Resumption of the Activity

You should wait a minimum of 30 minutes after the last sound of thunder is heard before resuming outdoor activities.

Extreme Heat and Sun Safety

Temperature

Weather conditions and forecasts should be monitored the day before matches, competition or any scheduled training. It is important to closely monitor local weather conditions to enable changes in training or the rescheduling of events. Prior to the start of any activity the organiser will determine whether the event shall proceed, based on the table below (created using the recommendations of Sports Medicine Australia). During the activity, the CSNSW Sport representative, ground manager or convener shall have the discretion to modify or cancel the game should the temperature continue to increase beyond the ranges shown below.

Temperature Management Guide

Ambient Temperature	Risk of Heat Illness	Management activity to be taken
30 degrees or less	Low-Moderate	Normal Management of Event
31 degrees – 35 degrees	High	Consider mitigation strategies; - Increased breaks - Modified formats - Modified venues
36 degrees or greater	Extreme	Play should consider ceasing

When considering management activity to be taken, officials are also encouraged to take into account the effect of humidity on playing conditions. If an official believes humidity is a factor they should consider using the following Bureau of Meteorology link to determine the Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT)¹; <http://www.bom.gov.au/products/IDN65179.shtml> .

The WBGT can then be applied to the table at [Appendix 1](#).

¹ The Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) is a measure of the heat stress in direct sunlight, which takes into account: temperature, humidity, wind speed, sun angle and cloud cover (solar radiation). It can provide a more accurate indication of playing conditions particularly when humidity is a factor

General guidelines

During the summer months and periods of extreme hot weather it is important to ensure that all players, officials and volunteers take measures to promote sun safety. Event organisers should take steps to facilitate sun safety whenever outdoor activity takes place.

Catholic Schools NSW endorses the following SMA strategies to minimise the risk of heat illness (heat stress) during hot conditions. Organisers should consider utilising or facilitating these during activity during hot conditions;

- Adjusting training and competition intensity
- Consider timing and re-scheduling to cooler parts of the day
- Encouraging appropriate clothing (light weight, loose fitting and covering as much of the skin as possible)
- Modifying warm ups
- Hydration (for all individuals)
- Being wary of athletes who may not be acclimatised
- Ensuring individuals who have experienced illness not take part

A copy of the SMA “Beat the Heat” Fact sheet may also be provided at the commencement of the event to players, parents and team officials (either in physical or electronic form).

<https://sma.org.au/sma-site-content/uploads/2017/08/beat-the-heat-2011.pdf>

Organisers should also

- promote and encourage players and officials to regularly apply sunscreen (preferably water soluble.)
- Schedule regular breaks during training and games to enable players and officials to rest (in the shade where possible).

Young children are especially at risk in the heat. Prior to puberty, the sweating mechanism, essential for effective cooling, is poorly developed. Although children can acclimatise to exercise in the heat, they take longer to do so than adults. **On no account should children be forced to continue sport or exercise if they appear distressed or complain about feeling unwell.**

Poor air quality can cause respiratory issues to all people when extended exposure occurs. These issues can be exacerbated however when individuals are undertaking physical activity requiring increased oxygen intake or they are members of a group which is more vulnerable.

Given the above, CSNSW Sport recommends that organisers take action to factor in the risk to health caused by poor air quality.

In order to provide information about the air quality in NSW, the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) provides updated hourly and daily air quality forecasts. The information can be found at the following link;

<https://www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/air-quality/air-quality-concentration-data-updated-hourly/daily-air-quality-data>

Please see [appendix 2](#) for further information about the AQI and the state government recommendations.

Given the recommendations provided by the state government, CSNSW Sport recommends the following steps are taken when the AQI rating for your particular region is as follows:

AQI	Action
0-33	No actions required
34-66	No actions required
67-99	Can continue, advise participants who may be unusually sensitive, to take extra precautions.
100-149	Should seriously consider cutting back or rescheduling activity. May depend on amount of individuals falling within 'sensitive groups' participating. Advise of risks.
150-200	Cancellation/Rescheduling
200+	Cancellation /Rescheduling

The following people are more likely to be affected:

- People with asthma: exposure to air pollution might worsen your symptoms or trigger asthma attacks.
- People with lung disease, such as chronic bronchitis (also called chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or COPD): exposure to air pollution might worsen your symptoms.
- People with cardiovascular (heart) disease: exposure to air pollution might induce symptoms such as palpitations, chest pain or shortness of breath.

If affected and symptoms persist or are severe, seek urgent medical advice from designated onsite medical officer

Appendix 1: Humidity Table and WBGT

Management Guide when humidity is a factor

WBGT Scale	Risk of Heat Illness	Management activity to be taken
25	Low-Moderate	Normal Management of Event
26-29	High	Consider mitigation strategies; - Increased breaks - Modified formats - Modified venues - Player/official rotation
30 or greater	Extreme	Play should consider ceasing

Appendix 2: State Government Recommendations And AQI

The Air Quality Index (AQI) is the scale used to measure air pollution to assist us understand air quality and modify our activities if pollution levels are high. The state government gives the following recommendations:

AQI	What action should people take?
VERY GOOD 0-33	Enjoy activities
GOOD 34-66	Enjoy activities
FAIR 67-99	People unusually sensitive to air pollution: Plan strenuous outdoor activities when air quality is better
POOR 100-149	AIR POLLUTION HEALTH ALERT Sensitive Groups: Cut back or reschedule strenuous outdoor activities
VERY POOR 150-200	AIR POLLUTION HEALTH ALERT Sensitive groups: Avoid strenuous outdoor activities Everyone: Cut back or reschedule strenuous outdoor activities
HAZARDOUS 200+	AIR POLLUTION HEALTH ALERT Sensitive groups: Avoid all outdoor physical activities Everyone: Significantly cut back on outdoor physical activities