

# EXTREME WEATHER POLICY – ASSOCIATION EVENTS AND COMPETITIONS



## 1. Scope

This document is an approved policy of the South Australian Little Athletics Association Inc. Affiliated members of the association are required to adhere to this policy and are encouraged to adopt this at Events and Competitions for the benefit of all members of the association.

## 2. Overview

Little Athletics SA has a responsibility to take a positive role in educating and increasing the awareness of its members, in regards to the dangers of physical activity in extreme weather conditions. Little Athletics SA acknowledges it has a responsibility and duty of care to ensure the safety of participants, particularly in competitions and events conducted by and on behalf of Little Athletics SA. With this in mind, the Little Athletics SA Extreme Weather Policy for affiliated centres, athletes, members, and Little Athletics SA sanctioned competitions and events has been developed in consideration of the guidelines produced by Sports Medicine Australia (SMA) for hot weather and also in consideration of the risks associated with other extreme weather conditions such as electrical storms.

This policy shall apply to all athletes, members, administrators, officials, coaches and athletes associated with Little Athletics SA and its affiliated centres at competitions and events.

The following recommended guidelines have been produced by Little Athletics SA to assist our association, its affiliated centres, clubs and members in deciding whether to modify, cancel or postpone events or training.

## 3. Hot Weather

For Association events conducted at the SA Athletics Stadium, the following hot weather policy will apply:

### 3.1. Temperature Determination

The forecast maximum temperature referred to in this section is that issued by the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) at 4:10pm CDT two days prior to competition (i.e. 4:10pm Friday for a competition to be conducted on a Sunday). Members are encouraged to refer to the Bureau's website which can be found at [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au)

The following clauses detail measures that will be taken during hot weather. Changes to competition scheduling or programming or cancellation can be summarised as follows:

- 3.1.1. If the temperature forecast by the Australian Bureau of Meteorology ([www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au)), as published at 4:10pm, two days prior to the competition;
  - i. Is between 37°C and 40°C, then the competition will be conducted to a **Hot Weather program**.
  - ii. Is 41°C or above the event will be cancelled and rescheduled to the next available date.
- 3.1.2. The forecast can be accessed via the Bureau of Meteorology website shortly after 4:10pm, and will be included in ABC radio and news bulletins after 4:10pm.
- 3.1.3. **Note:** The program is decided based on the Friday 4:10pm forecast. Should any subsequent forecast change the predicted temperature, the program will not be changed again.

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- 3.1.4. During days of extreme heat, track conditions will be monitored, and further changes may be made to the program to suit the conditions. This includes the possibility of cancelling events.
- 3.1.5. To accommodate the program in the shortened time frames, the number of trials conducted in field events may be reduced at the discretion of the Competition & Events Coordinator.

## 3.2. Discretionary Cancellation

- 3.2.1. Little Athletics SA reserves the right to cancel any competition at its absolute discretion if it is deemed that the environmental conditions, such as extreme humidity, present a serious health risk to athletes and officials, even if temperatures falls within the acceptable levels detailed within this policy document.

## 3.3. Further Recommended Actions

- 3.3.1. Coaches, parents and officials are strongly encouraged to promote fluid replacement before the competition, during breaks and after the competition.
- 3.3.2. Where possible, Little Athletics SA centres will promote fluid replacement before, during and after the competition over the PA System.
- 3.3.3. Little Athletics SA centres will strongly promote the use of existing shaded areas by participants during breaks in activities.
- 3.3.4. Little Athletics SA centres will provide extra temporary shade where possible.
- 3.3.5. Young children, and those with predisposed medical conditions are at a higher risk of heat related illness and are therefore encouraged to carefully consider their level of participation in athletic events in extreme heat conditions.

## 4. Thunderstorms

Thunderstorms present a significant risk to athletes, coaches, and officials when they occur in the vicinity of training or competition and event locations. In particular, thunderstorms that occur in and around an open area such as an athletics arena present a significant risk to life. Storms can also develop quickly.

It is widely recognised that a significant lightning threat extends outward of the thunderstorm cloud for approximately 10-15 kilometres, thus, when a storm is within this range, appropriate action should be taken to minimise the danger to participants. As a general guide, the ability to hear thunder is usually an indication that the storm is within 10-15 kilometres of your location.

In the event of the threat of a thunderstorm, the following actions should occur:

- Prior to and during training, competition or events, the BOM weather forecast should be monitored, and in particular the presence of a severe weather warning indicating a change of thunderstorms.
- If a severe weather warning is in effect or if thunderstorms are predicted, cancelling or postponing the training session, competition or event should be strongly considered.

In the event that thunder is heard or a thunderstorm occurs during Little Athletics SA training, competition or events the following action will be taken:

- The Competition Manager will ask all participants to immediately leave the arena or competition / training area and proceed inside a substantial building such as an office block, school or house.

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- It should be noted that small outdoor buildings, rain shelters and sheds are not considered substantial buildings and are not deemed to be a safe area to shelter.
- In the event that a substantial building is not available for shelter, a hard-topped metal vehicle with windows closed also provides good protection, but contact with metal surfaces in the vehicle should be avoided.
- Evacuation from the area to a safe location will be coordinated through PA announcements where available.
- Individuals should shelter inside away from windows and avoid contact with metal surfaces until the storm has passed.
- Any contact with electrical equipment and wiring should be avoided during an electrical storm.
- Corded phones should not be used during an electrical storm. Mobile phones and cordless phones are safe to use.
- Once an electrical storm has passed, activity should not resume for another 30 minutes as electrical charges can linger in clouds after the storm has passed.
- At this time, the Competition Manager or designated person will assess the area for damage before determining whether competition, training or the event should resume.
- No individuals will be permitted to return to the arena or competition/training area until the all clear is given by the Competition Manager.

## 5. Strong Winds

Strong winds present a safety risk to athletes, coaches, officials, staff and spectators in track and field and related competitions, events and training.

In the event of the threat of occurrence of strong winds, the following actions should occur:

- Prior to and during training, competition or events, the BOM weather forecast should be monitored, and in particular the presence of a severe weather warning indicating strong winds.
- If a severe weather warning is in effect or if strong winds are predicted, cancelling or postponing the training session, competition or event should be strongly considered.

In the event that strong winds occurs during Little Athletics SA training, competition or events the following action will be taken:

- The Competition Manager will ask all participants to immediately leave the arena or competition / training area and proceed inside a substantial building such as an office block, school or house.
- It should be noted that small outdoor buildings, rain shelters and sheds are not considered substantial buildings and are not deemed to be a safe area to shelter.
- In the event that a substantial building is not available for shelter, a hard-topped metal vehicle with windows closed may also provide good protection.
- Evacuation from the area to a safe location will be coordinated through PA announcements where available.
- Individuals should shelter inside away from windows until the threat has passed.
- Once strong winds have ceased, the Competition Manager or designated person will assess the area for damage before determining whether competition, training or the event should resume.
- No individuals will be permitted to return to the arena or competition/training area until the all clear is given by the Competition Manager.

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## 6. Low Visibility

Low visibility can present a safety risk to athletes, coaches, officials, staff and spectators in track and field and related competitions, events and training.

In the event of the threat of conditions resulting in low visibility, the following actions should occur:

- Prior to and during training, competition or events, the BOM weather forecast should be monitored, and in particular the presence of a severe weather warning indicating conditions of low visibility.
- If a severe weather warning is in effect or if low visibility is predicted, cancelling or postponing the training session, competition or event should be strongly considered.

In the event that conditions create a situation of low visibility during Little Athletics SA training, competition or events that reduced visibility to less than 200 metres, the following action will be taken:

- The Competition Manager will immediately cease the competition, training or event.
- Where possible, announcements will be made via a PA system or coordinated through the use of event radios.
- Once visibility has improved to beyond 200 metres, the Competition Manager or designated person will make a decision regarding whether to continue with or cancel the event.

## 7. Notification

Careful consideration is given with respect as to whether to cancel or postpone a Little Athletics SA competition or event. Should it be deemed necessary under this policy to cancel a competition or event, Little Athletics SA will endeavour to notify all affected athletes, coaches, and officials. Little Athletics SA will communicate any changes via the following methods:

- A news item will be placed on the Little Athletics SA website advising of the cancellation or postponement of a competition or event.
- An email will be sent to the Little Athletics SA database advising all current registered athletes, coaches, and officials of the cancellation or postponement.
- Notification will be provided via Little Athletics SA social media channels such as Facebook and Twitter.

## Intended Use

Every person is different and individuals will respond to participation in physical activity in extreme conditions in different ways. To this end, individuals are encouraged to assess their level of participation in athletic events and training in order to best avoid illness or injury in extreme weather conditions.

## Authorisation

<Signature of the Chief Executive Officer>

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<Date of approval by the Board>

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## **For Further information on this document, please contact:**

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