



Extreme Weather Policy

of

**Little Athletics Association
of Victoria Incorporated**

Policy B

Registration Number: A0003260D

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LITTLE ATHLETICS ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA INC
Registration Number: A0003260D

1. Introduction

Environmental factors regularly affect the conduct of Little Athletics events. While environmental factors will not usually influence whether a LAVic event should commence or continue, occasionally, extremely adverse weather conditions may give rise to a need to assess whether participants, officials and spectators are at risk.

Extreme weather may be defined as i weather that threatens the immediate or long-term safety of individuals, as a result of heat, rain, lightning, wind, or other unusual or unpredictable weather conditions.

Extreme weather can pose a health risk. Although the risk of heatstroke in athletics is low, participating in hot and humid conditions in particular can impair the body's ability to lose heat. Children normally self-regulate their exercise intensity in hot conditions so the greatest risk is when they are required to continue playing when their brain is telling them to stop. Older players, in particular those with specific illnesses such as diabetes or heart disease, may also be at increased risk. Finally wheelchair athletes often have impaired temperature regulation and specific provisions will apply to this group.

In extreme weather conditions officials and administrators in charge of Little Athletics events may decide to modify the schedule of relevant disciplines to protect athletes, officials and other participants from exposure to the elements or physical stress. There are also a number of other pro-active and preventative measures that can be taken which are mentioned later in this document.

As Event Director for all official LAVic events, the CEO of LAVic has the authority to direct the postponement or cancellation of such events if conditions pose an unacceptable risk to the health and safety of participants, officials or spectators.

2. Purpose

The policy is designed to protect people from injury and illness that may result by participating in athletics events in extreme weather conditions. The policy recognises that all athletes can be at risk although children can be at greater risk in some instances, especially heat stress.

Competition and event organisers have a duty of care to athletes, officials and other participants, which may include regularly monitoring environmental and playing conditions and to take action to minimise the risk of heat stress or threat of illness or injury to athletes, officials and other participants.

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3. Policy Aims

- To protect the health, safety and wellbeing of all who participate in the activities of Little Athletics events.
- To ensure that venues are a safe place to compete, spectate and officiate as far as is reasonably practicable.
- To provide guidance to Event and Competition organisers regarding the effective management of extreme weather conditions.

4. Policy Statement

Officials and administrators responsible for conducting and managing athletics events must closely and regularly monitor weather forecasts and seek to comply with the following guidelines when conducting or managing extreme weather at events and competitions, including weekly competitions and training sessions.

a) GENERAL

- 1) Relevant officials responsible for conducting and managing athletics events must be aware of weather forecasts and plan accordingly to minimise the risk of inclement weather affecting athletes, officials and spectators.
- 2) All Officials and participants should be made aware of the chain of command for event management and control. It should be clear who has the authority to
 - a) Suspend and subsequently resume the activity or event;
 - b) Cancel the activity or event;
 - c) Communicate with stakeholders regarding decisions made about the activity or event.

Ultimately the CEO of LAVic is the designated Event Director for all sanctioned LAVic events. If you are unsure as to the activity preceding you should make contact.

- 3) Where weather or other conditions threaten the immediate safety of the athletes, spectators, officials or any other persons on the competition or event site, the relevant officials responsible may suspend or postpone the event until such time that in his/her opinion the threat to safety is no longer evident.
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- 4) Considerations which must be taken into account when determining the level of risk are for an average person involved in continuous strenuous activity in high temperatures are listed below. Individual persons will be affected differently by the environmental conditions depending on their:
 - a) Fitness level
 - b) Athletic ability
 - c) Age
 - d) Gender
 - e) Any predisposed medical conditions; and
 - f) Level of acclimatisation

b) HOT WEATHER

- 1) Heat illness can occur across all events and at temperature levels well below those normally considered to be a risk. Heat exhaustion has occurred at Little Athletics carnivals in events from 100m to 3000m, in walks and in field events. This reality highlights the importance at any carnival or pursuing a range of risk minimisation strategies.
- 2) The management of extreme heat at events and competitions (including weekly competitions and training events) is vital to the health, safety and welfare of athletes.

c) HIGH WINDS

- 1) High winds have the potential to create dangerous conditions for athletes, spectators and officials. Where these winds create unreasonable risks within the track area activities may need to be suspended by relevant Officials responsible for conducting and managing athletic events. Hazards may include furniture or fixtures disturbed, items being blown onto the field or track, or athletes health threatened by the force of the wind.

d) WET WEATHER

- 1) If it is raining heavily, and there are safety concerns, activities may be discontinued for a period of time and conditions reassessed to determine whether activities should continue.
- 2) If a hail storm occurs during a carnival or event, all activities should be suspended and participants should seek suitable protective cover.
- 3) Relevant officials responsible for conducting and managing athletics events must take the necessary steps to ensure that the track surface, field surface and surrounds are safe for use. It is essential that the relevant people inspect the site for each discipline (including lines and surrounds) to determine its suitability for use before any activities are commenced or resumed.

e) LIGHTNING

- 1) In Australia, approximately 25% of people killed by lightning are playing sport. When thunderstorms threaten, the relevant officials responsible for conducting and managing athletics events must assess the situation ensuring the safety of athletes, officials and spectators.

- 2) Generally speaking when an individual can see lightning and/or hear thunder he/she is already at risk.
- 3) Relevant officials responsible for conducting and managing athletics events must ensure that all athletes, officials and spectators where possible are inside a safe shelter during a thunderstorm.

Lightning Facts

- All thunderstorms produce lightning and are dangerous
- Any time thunder is heard, the thunderstorm is close enough to pose an immediate lightning threat to your location
- When thunderstorms are in the area but not overhead, the lightning threat can still exist even if it is sunny overhead, not raining, or when clear sky is visible

The 30/30 rule lightning

- By the time the flash-to-bang count approaches 30 seconds – all individuals should already be inside a safe shelter.
- Wait at least 30 minutes after the last sound (thunder) or observation of lightning and ensure conditions are completely safe before leaving shelter to resume activities. Each time lightning is observed or thunder is heard the 30 minutes clock should be re-started.

f) SMOKE & DUST

- 1) Smoke and airborne dust are by-products of a number of other extreme conditions including weather and can create a possible risk for people with certain conditions i.e. asthma, heart conditions.
- 2) Relevant officials responsible for managing and conducting athletics events and competitions must be aware of these extreme conditions and take necessary steps to suspend activities in the case of a significant potential risk.

5. Region/State Events

The CEO will act as Event Director for all Region/State events and exercise the authority to postpone or cancel these events if conditions pose an unacceptable risk to health and safety of participants, officials or spectators.

- 1) In extreme hot weather conditions a 'Total Fire Ban' restriction will act as the mechanism for review of the event.
 - 2) If 'Total Fire Ban' restrictions have been assigned to your particular Region you must contact the CEO for further discussion and instruction.
 - 3) If on the day of the event extreme heat (38°), high winds, wet weather, lightning and smoke/dust are impacting on the ongoing operations please contact the CEO for further discussion and instructions.
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- 5) If a hail storm occurs during an event, all activities should be suspended (by the Meeting Manager) and participants should seek suitable protective cover.
- 6) If it is raining heavily, and there are safety concerns, activities may be discontinued for a period of time (by the Meeting Manager) and conditions reassessed to determine whether activities should continue.
- 7) In reference to points 5 & 6 above the CEO will be responsible for the decision making at State Championship events.
- 8) If Regions fail to implement postponements or cancellations as agreed with the CEO, all progressions within the Region from the agreed time onwards will not qualify for the next round.

6. Centre Events

Whilst allowing flexibility to conduct Centre activities given the variety of differing conditions throughout the state, the above guidelines should be considered before conducting activities ensuring preventative measures are implemented and conditions do not pose an unacceptable risk to health and safety of participants, officials or spectators.

- 1) In extreme hot weather conditions a 'Total Fire Ban' restriction should act as the mechanism for review of the event.
- 2) In extreme weather conditions officials and administrators in charge of Little Athletics events may decide to modify the schedule of relevant disciplines to protect athletes, officials and other participants from exposure to the elements or physical stress.

7. Responsibilities

Board

Ensure that policies and procedures reflect current recommendations for reducing and managing risks associated with weather conditions.

CEO

Act as Event Director for all official LAVic events and exercise the authority to postpone or cancel such events if conditions pose an unacceptable risk to health and safety of participants, officials or spectators.

Officials / Meeting Manager

Be aware of prevailing weather conditions and how that may affect athletes, officials and spectators at the event and apply this Extreme Weather Policy.

Athletes / Participants

Be aware of prevailing weather conditions and of this policy. Alert the officials of any safety concerns. Follow the directions of authorised officials.