



WEATHER POLICY

July 2024

This document is recommended guidance for committee members, coaching co-ordinators, coaches and other club officials responsible for the safety of athletes and volunteers during training.

Also recommended as guidance for parents/guardians and athletes.

Additional factors to those outlined in this document may also be taken into consideration by the club when deciding if training should be cancelled due to adverse weather. These may include, but not be limited to, the overall safety of athletes, coaches and volunteers. Conditions at the venue and surrounding area. Advice of/cancellation by the facility operator. The ability for coaches to keep athletes warm/cool, hydrated and the availability of shelter affordable to athletes, coaches and volunteers.

The ratio of coaches to athletes. The safety of travelling to training.



VALE OF AYLESBURY ATHLETIC CLUB INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY.

Our number one priority is the safety of our athletes. Sometimes, to keep athletes safe due to conditions at the stadium arena (and if training away from the stadium) or adverse weather, it is necessary to cancel or abandon training.

1 . Clothing

It is the responsibility of parents and carers to ensure that children and young people are dressed accordingly for the weather conditions when activities go ahead. Athletics can continue in very cold/wet conditions and children need to be suitably dressed during training and events.

Cold weather

- (waterproof) Coats
- Thermal under layers
- Gloves
- Hats

Hot weather

- Suncream
- Water (refillable)
- Sun hats (when not training/competing).

2 . Venue and Weather Conditions

Training will be cancelled for the following reasons:

- **Very hot weather:** dangerous for athletes' safety.
- **Frozen track and infield:** dangerous for athletes' safety.
- **Waterlogged Venue:** dangerous for athletes' safety.
- **Snow Covered Track and Infield:** dangerous for athletes' safety.
- **Fog:** dangerous for athletes' safety.
- **Thunder and Lightning:** dangerous for athletes' safety.

Wherever possible cancellations will be communicated with plenty of notice. However, sometimes it is impossible to predict how the weather will be on the day or during a training session. Decisions around safety are collaborative between the committee (with advice from Stadium Management at times) and coaches.

3 . Hot Weather

Higher temperatures and sun exposure can lead to:

- dehydration
- heat exhaustion and heatstroke
- overheating

Anyone exposed to the heat can be at risk of these dangers, especially when completing physical activity. However, some children and young people may be more prone. For example, those with existing medical conditions and those on multiple medications may be more vulnerable.

know the signs of heat-related illnesses: warnings of heatstroke include (but are not limited to) a high temperature, dizziness, feeling or being sick and becoming clammy or irritable. Understanding what to look for ensures you can seek support as soon as possible.

Playing sport in temperatures at 32 degrees or higher for children can be dangerous.

We recommend using the **MET Office** website or app Weather and climate change - <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/>

This website will also provide timely weather warning information. For more information about the MET office measures temperature see:

<https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/guides/observations/how-we-measure-temperature>

Children who play sports or are physically active in hot weather can be at risk for heat illnesses including dehydration and heat stroke. Children sweat less than adults. This makes it harder for children to cool off and so needs to be managed carefully. If the temperature at training is forecast to be 30C or 31C, or 34C or higher for senior athletes, a drinks break must be provided at regular intervals. The timing of the drinks break is at the discretion of the coach. Evening training allows for training after peak temperatures.

Daytime training should take heat temperatures and water/shade breaks into consideration.

Coaches will encourage athletes of all ages to drink fluids prior to, during and after all training sessions to avoid dehydration and for rehydration following strenuous activity. Junior athletes who do not bring water to training will be told they are not to train. Where possible, we will provide a shaded area for participants during breaks in training sessions.

To avoid heat exhaustion if participants feel unwell during exercise they should immediately stop and rest. Further benefit comes if the rest is in a shaded area with some passing breeze (from a fan if necessary) and the person takes extra hydration. Misting or spraying with water can also help. Heat stroke is a potentially fatal condition and must be treated immediately. It should be assumed that any collapsed participant is at danger of heat stroke. The best first aid measures are “strip/soak/fan”: a) Strip off any excess clothing. b) Soak with water. c) Fan. Ice placed in groin and armpits is also helpful. The aim is to reduce body temperature as quickly as possible.

The participant should immediately be referred for treatment by a medical professional. It is important to note that heat exhaustion or heat stroke can still occur even in the presence of good hydration.

- **> 29°C**

Extreme Conditions

No outdoor training or indoor without air conditioning, delay training until cooler, or cancel training.

- **27 - 29°C**

High risk for heat related illness.

Maximum of 1 hour of training with 4 by 4-minute breaks within the hour. No high intensity or additional conditioning allowed.

- **24 - 27°C**

Moderate risk for heat related illness.

Maximum 90 mins of training time with a mandatory 10-minute break after 30 minutes of continuous training. Access to water at all times.

- **> 24°C**

Less than ideal condition.

Use discretion, provide three separate, mandatory 4-minute breaks each hour.

- **< 24°C**

Good Conditions

Normal activities. 3 drinks breaks should be provided as a minimum. 3 minutes per break is recommended.

4 . Cold Weather

The effects of cold weather can impact health and safety during training. The definition of “cold stress” varies depending on how accustomed people are to cold weather.

Cold weather conditions can be just as dangerous as hot weather conditions. The mix of cold air, hard and slippery surfaces can cause difficulty breathing, muscle pulls, loss of feeling in extremities, frostbite to exposed skin, and greater risk for injury coming in contact with a harder/cold surface.

Below are the guidelines for temp (air temp or wind-chill factor), amount of exposure, and suggested clothing during cold weather activities.

- **< 0°C - with wind and/or rain.**

Extreme Conditions.

Cancel training or attempt to move indoors.

- **0 - 2 °C**

High Risk of cold related illness.

Modify practice to keep athletes moving and limit exposure. If it is also raining, consider cancelling.

- **2 - 3°C**

Moderate Risk of cold related illness.

Ensure athletes have suitable protective clothing. Athletes should be encouraged to wear hats and gloves. If there is heavy rain, consider cancelling.

- **3 - 5°C**

Less than ideal conditions.

Use discretion, Beware of the potential risk of cold injury. If there is heavy rain consider cancelling for children younger than 12.

- **> 5°C**

Good Conditions.

Normal activities.

5 . Storms And Lightning

In the event of thunder and lightning, or extreme winds and rain, outside activity will stop and people ushered to an area where players can shelter safely. If the weather makes training unsafe, it should be abandoned.

30/30 rule (ROSPA)

Research shows that people struck by lightning are predominantly hit before and after the peak of the storm. This means that you should be thinking about the proximity of the lightning, not the occurrence of rain. **The 30/30 rule** provides a good way of ensuring everyone is sheltering during the riskiest parts of the storm.

It proposes that **if the flash (lightning) to bang (thunder) is 30 seconds in length or less you should seek shelter**. Staying inside this shelter is advised until 30 minutes past the last clap of thunder. This ensures that any distant strikes at the beginning of the storm (lightning can travel up to 10 miles), or trailing storm clouds at the back of the storm do not take anyone by surprise.

Seeking shelter

- Coaches/volunteers should direct athletes to shelter under the overhang outside the stadium reception entrance, or inside the stadium building, to wait for the storm to pass. Everyone should get out of the athletics arena.
- If training away from the stadium ideally, seek shelter inside a large building or a motor vehicle keeping away from, and getting out of wide, open spaces and exposed hilltops if training away from the track
- If training away from the stadium and exposed to the elements with nowhere to shelter, make yourself as small a target as possible by crouching down with your feet together, hands on knees and your head tucked in. This technique keeps as much of you off the ground as possible.
- The inside of a car is a safe place to be in a storm, lightning will spread over the metal of the vehicle before earthing to the ground through the tyres.
- Do not shelter beneath tall or isolated trees.

If the storm persists contact parents to collect athletes early, if possible, via direct contact messaging (coaches or athletes), Heja or via group email.

Additional references:

Guidance

Beat the heat: staying safe in hot weather

Updated 13 March 2024

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/beat-the-heat-hot-weather-advice/beat-the-heat-staying-safe-in-hot-weather>

Sports Grounds Safety Authority

Planning for extreme heat at sports grounds

<https://sgsa.org.uk/document/planning-for-extreme-heat-at-sports-grounds/>

Gov.uk

Collection

Hot weather and health: guidance and advice

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hot-weather-and-health-guidance-and-advice>

VoAAC Committee approved

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