

Swimming North Coast Inc



Weather Policy

Adopted March 2017

The health and safety of our members is a paramount concern of Swimming North Coast. As such to reduce the risk of injury, manage potentially dangerous weather situations and meet legal obligations for duty of care, Swimming North Coast aims to provide a safe environment for swimmers, coaches, Technical Officials and spectators.

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear guidelines and risk management procedures for event organisers, Meet Directors and Referees on the occasion of adverse weather conditions.

This Policy document includes guidelines for the following adverse weather procedures:

1. Hot Weather
2. Wet Weather and /or Flooding
3. Cold Weather
4. Lightning
5. High Winds
6. Fire, Smoke and Haze

Definitions

Ambient Temperature: Temperature of the surrounding air, not taking into account humidity or wind in the air

Approved Swim Meet or Carnival: A swim meet or carnival that has been approved by Swimming North Coast and/or Swimming NSW and conducted within the North Coast Area.

Controlling Body: The organising body of the swim meet or carnival.

This is the Club running or hosting the swim meet or carnival for inter club meets, invitational events, club nights, club Championships, Qualifying Meets, Development Meets or Time Trials. Swimming North Coast is the controlling body for SNC Long Course and Short Course Championships, Winter Sprints and associated qualifying meets, Speedo Sprints and associated qualifying meets, and Swimming North Coast Development Days.

Dehydration: 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.

Fog: Condensed water vapour in cloudlike masses lying close to the ground and limiting visibility.

Heat exhaustion: A form of heat illness characterised by a high heart rate, dizziness, headache, loss of endurance/skill/confusion and nausea

Heat Illness: Occurs with high intensity activity that elevates 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, 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): 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.

Procedure

Prior to the commencement of a Swim Meet, Carnival or other swimming activity the Pool Management, Meet Director, the Controlling Body and the Referee should assess the weather conditions based on available information and advice and act to minimise risks to swimmers, Technical Officials, Coaches and Spectators.

Decisions may be reviewed in light of changes of weather conditions.

In extreme conditions, suspension of swimming may occur during the day.

Postponement or Cancellation

Postponement or Cancellation may also be necessary on some occasions. (Note it may be difficult to reschedule an event as the calendar is often very congested)

If an event is to be cancelled and/or rescheduled and/or relocated, the controlling body will use their best endeavours to notify participants. The controlling body will determine the most appropriate method of communication and might consider community radio, phone calls or e-mails or social media.

Each club should have its own policy as to refunding any fees to swimmers or clubs

Refund of entry fees are at the discretion of the Controlling Body.

Note: Swimming North Coast has a "No Refund Policy".

Special Considerations may be made on a Case by Case basis.

1. HOT WEATHER

- 1.1 Before the start of the event, the controlling body will monitor the expected temperatures for the duration of the event. Obtain an accurate temperature (both ambient and WBGT) from the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) www.bom.gov.au/info/thermal_stress/index.shtml, before assessing the severity of the conditions.
- 1.2 Before the start of each day, the temperature will be monitored and when necessary all clubs will be made aware of the expected extreme temperatures.
- 1.3 The controlling body and/or host club must make every effort to provide as much shelter and shade as possible for swimmers, officials and spectators.
- 1.4 Swimmers, officials and spectators should at all times be encouraged to wear hats, long sleeved shirts and other sun protection, when not actually competing. It is recommended that a hat be part of any uniform and sunscreen be worn as appropriate.
Announcements should be made throughout the day to remind people to reapply sunscreen.
- 1.5 Drinks should be available at every venue where competition takes place. Water should be available in unlimited quantities. Other drinks may be served or sold as determined by the host club(s).
- 1.6 Suitable refreshments may include fruit, ice blocks. Walk ways and starting blocks may be cooled by hosing, but care must be taken to not make these slippery.
- 1.7 Where available, shelter should be offered for swimmers and officials not involved in current event.
- 1.8 Technical Official and competitor protocols may be modified to keep those involved in the shade for maximum amount of time.

- 1.9 In making decisions, the controlling body should take account of all relevant factors, including the age and health of swimmers and officials, the weather conditions and climate for that part of the country, the level of humidity and the amount of shade or shelter available at the venue.

2. WET WEATHER and/or FLOODING

- 2.1 Prior to the event ensure a proactive approach and obtain details about local weather conditions from the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM), www.bom.gov.au/.
- 2.2 Obtain details and advice from State Emergency Services (SES).
- 2.3 Obtain road condition advice from Live Traffic.
- 2.4 Rain is not a problem in itself.
- 2.5 Where possible, shelter should be offered for swimmers and officials not involved in current competition.
- 2.6 Extra care should be taken where electronic equipment is in use.
- 2.7 Surfaces should be monitored to avoid additional slip hazards.
- 2.8 Where significant flooding and/or road closures occur it may be necessary to cancel or postpone an event if the numbers able to attend make it unviable.
- 2.9 The controlling body may contact local and state/territory agencies for input on weather and road conditions. The controlling body should review such things as the present weather condition and the traffic conditions within the immediate area as well as outlying roads upon which players and officials are arriving. Based on this information, the controlling body will decide whether to cancel play/competition.

3. COLD WEATHER

- 3.1 Cold weather, often linked with rain and wind, may be a consideration. The controlling body should make visitors aware of the conditions especially if shelter is limited.
- 3.2 In severe weather conditions where the swimming pool is NOT heated the controlling body should advise visiting clubs of the anticipated pool temperature.

4. LIGHTNING

- 4.1 Lightning can strike without other typical storm characteristics (i.e. thunder, rain and wind) being present. Swimming North Coast is committed to ensuring all swimmers, Technical Officials, coaches and spectators are safe during lightning activity.
- 4.2 When lightning is sighted by the Meet Director or Referee or Pool Management, the controlling body will suspend competition and all swimmers will be required to leave the pool immediately and move to a safe structure.
- 4.3 When the Pool Management and the Meet Director deem it safe to return to the pool, the Swim Meet may continue -usually 30mins after last lightning strike.

4.4 Identification of safe structures:

No place is absolutely safe from lightning strikes, but some places are much safer than others. The Pool Management and the Meet Director must identify the location's safe areas and ensure that all parties are aware of them.

SAFER areas include:

- (a) Enclosed vehicles with windows closed (car, bus). Do not touch metal parts.
- (b) Substantial enclosed buildings.
- (c) Low ground, sheltering in clumps of low bushes.
- (d) Trees of uniform height- i.e. forest.

UNSAFE areas include:

- (a) High ground.
- (b) Open ground.
- (c) Water including indoor and outdoor pools.
- (d) Isolated or tall trees.
- (e) Near outdoor metal structures such as shade shelters, fences, flag poles, gates, seats, steps, hand rails, boundary pegs.
- (f) Equipment such as umbrellas etc.

- 4.5 If you are caught outside during a lightning activity and feel your hair stand on end or hear buzzing/crackling noise in the air, you are within the field of charge of a lightning strike. Remove metal objects (keys, badges, belts etc.), crouch down with feet together, head down and hands over your ears. It is safer to adopt this position if outdoors than to be in one of the unsafe situations listed above.

First Aid for Lightning Victims

Victims of lightning strikes are safe to handle - they do not "retain charge". First aiders must ensure they do not become another casualty - move the victim to a safer location. Effects of lightning strike include cardiac and respiratory arrest caused by disruption of the brains' control centres. Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) or Expired Air Resuscitation (EAR) should be given as required. It is important that even people who show no symptoms immediately after the strike receive medical attention as some effects may not be immediately obvious. Do not hesitate to call 000.

5. HIGH WINDS

- 5.1 Wind conditions can change very suddenly during a day.
- 5.2 At all swim meets where shade shelters are used, patrons should be advised to securely anchor these structures, either with pegs and ropes, suitable weights or sand bags.
- 5.3 As a courtesy to visitors it is helpful if the host club or controlling body provides additional pegs or sandbags.
- 5.4 The Meet Director and Referee should monitor shade shelters in their risk assessment to ensure they are securely anchored.
- 5.5 All other moveable objects, for example chairs and signs should be secured.

6. FIRE, SMOKE and HAZE

- 6.1 Prior to the event ensure details about local weather conditions are sourced from the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM), www.bom.gov.au/. In the event that weather conditions are conducive to the spread of dangerous bushfires BOM will issue Fire Weather Warnings within 24 hours of the potential onset of hazardous conditions. These warnings are also broadcast on radio and television.
- 6.2 If prior warning is received on the potential onset of hazardous conditions, including bushfire, smoke and haze, the controlling body should make a decision on whether the event is to be altered, cancelled or postponed to ensure safety of participants.
- 6.3 If prior warning is not received and hazardous conditions are approaching ensure contact with the NSW Rural Fire Service and follow all instructions given.
- 6.4 In the unlikely event of evacuation being needed, venue evacuation will be handled by the Pool Management.