

SEISA ADVERSE WEATHER POLICY



Overview

- a. SEISA run competitions and carnivals in a range of sports at a range of venues. Each organisation has in place a considered management structure for overseeing inter-school sporting competition.
- b. As part of their governance responsibilities the Heads of the SEISA schools have identified the need to provide guidelines for those acting on their behalf in the management of inter-school sporting competition.
- c. These guidelines have been developed in consultation with the Heads of Sport and SEISA Executive.
- d. This is a general policy designed to provide guidance around inclement weather & triggers that can mean changes to scheduled games. It is not an exhaustive list of all instances to suspend or cancel games. Schools should consider warnings and advice issued by VIC Emergency and the BOM. Advice can be sought from the SEISA Executive Officer.
- e. This policy also draws attention to the general risks of heat-related illness or injury in sport and provide precise guidelines for conduct of sporting activities in hot weather, poor air quality and in instances of lightning strikes or hail.
- f. This document should be read in conjunction with the policy provided within Appendix 1.
- g. Any games that are modified will need to meet the minimum requirements set out in the SEISA Handbook Rules if a result is to be obtained. In the event a game is called off, or if it does not meet these requirements, the result will be a draw, and points will be allocated in line with the rules set out in the SEISA Handbook.
- h. In the event of an imposed delay or cancellation due to adverse weather for the Athletics, Swimming, Cross Country, or Spring Carnival, these events may continue when it is safe to proceed in whole or part, at the discretion of the SEISA Executive Officer in conjunction with the Heads of sport.

Electrical storms/ Lightning (all sports)

- (i) In the event of electrical/ thunderstorms, (especially if the time delay between thunder and the flash is less than 30 seconds) players, coaches and officials should seek urgent safe shelter. Play should only restart if at least 30 minutes has passed since the last sound of thunder/sight of lightning and coaches and officials are confident of player safety.
- (ii) Severe Hail
When safety is compromised by severe hail, coaches and officials should agree to abandon play and seek immediate shelter until the hail stops and it is safe to restart play.

Rain

- i. Decisions to modify or cancel games due to rain will be made on the day of the competition by assessing conditions at the venue and by consulting the BOM.
- ii. Schools should aim to play games, wherever possible, however, if there is severe rain, a torrential downpour, or a playing field is severely waterlogged or flooded, making play impossible or dangerous, play will be considered unsafe and games should not be proceed.
- iii. In the event of light- moderate rain, SEISA sports that are ordinarily played in wet weather should continue to be played (e.g. AFL, Soccer), unless it is not safe to do so. Considerations for safety include the condition of the pitch/oval – a playing field is severely waterlogged or flooded, making play impossible or dangerous. In these instances, play is considered unsafe to continue/ resume.
- iv. For sports that are ordinarily postponed/called off due to rain (e.g. Cricket, Tennis), coaches, in consultation with umpires will determine if there is to be a delay, modification or cancellation of the game. Where two coaches and umpire are not in agreement to delay/cancel games due to rain, the home team shall have the deciding vote. Student safety must always be the top priority.
- v. Only games that are directly affected by rain/flooding may be delayed or called off. All other games should continue as scheduled.
- vi. All decisions around cessation of play, resuming play and modification of games will be made by the umpire/s in charge of the game, in conjunction with the two team coaches. In the event team coaches and umpire cannot agree on the course of action, the home team make the final decision to play or not.
- vii. The SEISA Executive Officer, in conjunction with the Heads of Sport will determine any modifications/cancellations to outdoor carnival events. Changes may be made up to 24 hours prior to the event, or in the case of surfing, up to a week prior to the event.

	Triggers to Stop Play (Rain) – Guidelines only
Tennis	• Visible Puddles: If water accumulates on the court, particularly on hardcourts or synthetic grass, play must stop. • Slippery Lines: If the white lines become slippery, creating a high risk of injury. • Heavy Rain/Storms: Play should stop for heavy, persistent rain. • Heavy Mist/Drizzle: If the mist makes the court surface dangerous, play should be suspended Considerations by Surface Hardcourts: • Extremely dangerous when wet; play should be halted at the first sign of rain making the surface slick. Clay Courts: • Often allowed to play through light, passing rain, but should stop if the rain becomes constant or heavy. Synthetic Courts: • Waterlogged Infill: If the sand infill becomes saturated and mud-like, traction is significantly reduced. • Standing Water/Puddles: Any standing water (puddles) on the surface is a sign to stop, as it indicates the drainage is saturated. • Slippery Lines: White painted lines become extremely dangerous and slippery, often becoming a hazard before the rest of the court. • Reduced Traction: If you experience slipping during quick changes of direction or upon landing, the surface is too wet. • Cleanliness: If dirt or moss is brought onto the surface by water, it can make the court dangerous, signalling it is time to stop and clean
Softball	• Safety Hazards: If heavy rain makes the field, particularly the pitching mound or batter's box, too slippery or dangerous for players. • Standing Water: If the diamond has large puddles or is "under water," rendering it unplayable. • Heavy Rain: While light, passing showers may not stop play, continuous heavy rain that prohibits visibility or causes rapid deterioration of the field will cause a stoppage

Soccer	• Waterlogged Pitch: If heavy rain makes the field unsafe (high risk of slipping/injury) or prevents the ball from rolling (standing water/puddles), the match should be abandoned. • Safety Hazards: Severe weather conditions that threaten player safety beyond just being wet, such as excessively high winds or temperatures that create dangerous, slippery conditions.
Cricket	• Heavy Rain: Play is suspended if there is a severe downpour as this is unsafe for players and spectators. • Slippery Outfield: If the field is too wet, it becomes dangerous for players to turn while fielding or for bowlers in their run-up. • Pitch Damage: If the pitch is too wet, it can cause unpredictable and dangerous bounce, which can be fatal. In modern cricket, the pitch is covered to prevent this, but the umpires will abandon play if the pitch remains unsafe to play on. • Poor Visibility: Rain often brings poor light conditions, making it difficult for the batter to see a ball moving at high speed.
Hockey	• Standing Water/Flooding: If rain is so heavy that water pools, the pitch becomes dangerous, or the ball cannot roll, the match should be stopped. • Freezing Conditions: If rain is falling when temperatures are near freezing, it can create dangerous ice on the pitch, requiring a stop. • Visibility: If heavy rain makes it impossible for players to see the ball or field markings clearly
AFL	• Dangerous Surface Conditions: A match may be cancelled or delayed if severe rainfall causes flash flooding or makes the pitch waterlogged to the point of being unsafe.

Heat

Prior to the Competition

- i. If at 9.00 a.m. on the day prior to the competition the predicted temperature in the playing location as provided by the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) is 36°C or above, then the SEISA Executive Officer in conjunction with the Heads of Sport will by 10.00 a.m. on the day prior cancel all sport between those competing teams at the location where temperature limits have been reached (for the sake of clarity this includes indoor and outdoor sport). All games between schools at venues where the temperature limits have not been reached will proceed as planned.
- ii. Prior to the competition the monitoring of the predicted temperature will be the responsibility of the Executive Officer and the respective Heads of Sport.

On the day of the competition

- iii. At 31°C ambient temperature (actual temperature of the air, as measured by the BoM) Directors of Sport, Sport Coordinators and Coaches must consider and implement where appropriate management procedures consistent with the advice provided in Appendix 1 which will attempt to ensure that environmental and risk factors relevant to heat stress are minimised.
- iv. Once the ambient temperature is 36°C or above, then the competition or training must be suspended (pool venues excluded). If the temperature does not fall below 36°C during the subsequent 30-minute period, then the competition or training must be cancelled.
- v. On the day of the competition or training, the responsibility for monitoring temperatures is as described below:

Outdoors:

- It is the responsibility of the Home School Sports Coordinator or their delegated representative to monitor the BoM Website to determine **local** temperatures.

Indoors:

- It is the responsibility of the Home School Sports Coordinator or their delegated representative to use a thermometer to gauge the temperature.

Carnival Venue:

- It is the responsibility of the SEISA Executive Officer, in conjunction with the Heads of Sport to determine the temperature.

Air Quality

- (i) When the PM 2.5 Air Quality Index (AQI) reading reaches **51+**, Heads of Sport, Sport Coordinators and Coaches, where appropriate, must consider and implement management procedures consistent with the advice provided in Appendix 2 which will attempt to ensure that environmental and risk factors relevant for respiratory issues/stress are minimised.
- (ii) Once the PM 2.5 AQI reading reaches **101** or above, then the game/training must be suspended. If the PM 2.5 AQI reading does not fall below 101 during the subsequent 60-minute period, then the game/training must be cancelled.

- (iii) On the day of the Competition and or Training, the responsibility for monitoring air quality is as described below:

Outdoors:

- It is the responsibility of the Home School Head of Sport/ Sports Coordinator or their delegated representative to monitor the aqicn (or similar) website to determine local air quality.

Indoors:

- It is the responsibility of the Home School Head of Sport/ Sports Coordinator or their delegated representative to use an air quality detector to measure the air quality. If a school does not have access to an air quality detector, the outdoor air quality measurement will be used for indoor sport.

Carnival Venue:

- Is the responsibility of the SEISA Executive Officer, in conjunction with the Heads of Sport to determine the air quality. If no access to an air quality detector is available, the outdoor air quality measurement will be used.

SEISA Sport Adverse Weather Policy Appendix 1 – Heat Policy

1. Context

- (a) Heat related illness and injury consequent upon exercise can be severe and, in some cases, fatal. The danger of heat related illness and injury must never be underestimated. Heat stress during exercise needs to be carefully managed.
- (b) The management of exercise during extreme heat is particularly important in the case of children and young adults (referred to as “children” throughout the policy and supporting documentation)
- (c) The management of elderly personnel who may be acting as officials is also particularly important.

2. Detail

Environments to which competitors are exposed will vary as will Individual responses to heat stress on the individual. It should be noted that there is a risk of heat related illness or injury at all temperatures, however, the risk is much greater at 30°C or above.

It is important to understand the factors that may contribute to heat stress. What constitutes extreme conditions will vary depending upon:

(a) Environmental Factors

- (i) The type of sport e.g. fitness based vs. skill based.
- (ii) The venue utilised by the sport e.g. water based vs. field based or indoor vs. outdoor.
- (iii) The duration and intensity of the activity.
- (iv) The time of day during which the activity takes place.
- (v) Humidity of the immediate environment.
- (vi) Exposure to Solar Radiation.

(b) Individual Risk Factors

- (i) Fitness levels of the athlete / official.
- (ii) Age of the athlete / official.
- (iii) Acclimatisation.
- (iv) Hydration levels.
- (v) History of heat stress (genetic factors).

It is difficult to predict precisely how an individual will respond to heat stress and how likely heat stress is to cause illness or injury in a particular sport. Where there is any doubt, based on medical information provided by parents/carers in relation to a particular individual, specialised medical advice should be sought.

(c) Management of Environmental and Individual Risk Factors

Where possible, the factors contributing to heat stress should be managed by attending to:

- (i) Event timing – altering the time of the event to take in the cooler part of the day (e.g. early morning).
- (ii) Reduce the length of the game.
- (iii) Ensure all players are well hydrated, prior to and during the event.
- (iv) Player rest and rotation.
- (v) Pre-cooling.
- (vi) Appropriate clothing.
- (vii) Use of shade, fans, ice, water etc.
- (viii) Acclimatisation to heat through appropriate training.

(d) Signs of Heat-Related Illness or Injury

- Common symptoms of heat-related illness or injury include (but are not limited to): fatigue, nausea, headache, confusion, light headedness, high heart rate, collapse, dry skin and/or pale skin colour (pale skin colour may occur with or without dry skin).
- If a child complains of feeling unwell during exercise or experiences any of the above symptoms, he or she should **immediately** cease activity and steps should be taken to assist the child to cool down (removal of unnecessary clothing, provision of drinks, move to a cool area with air-conditioning or a fan, spray with water, application of wrapped ice packs to the child's armpits and/or groin area). **Under no circumstances** should a child be permitted or encouraged to continue exercise.
- Medical advice should be sought promptly if the symptoms do not improve rapidly.
- Medical advice should **always** be sought **immediately** if a child collapses.
- If a child suffers heat-related illness or injury, a record should be maintained to assist in treatment and immediate and future management of the condition.

(e) Guidelines for Avoiding Dehydration (Sports Medicine Australia)

Dehydration can occur in the winter months, however, the importance of addressing hydration is underlined in extreme heat.

General

- Children should not wait to feel thirsty as thirst may not be a reliable indication of fluid needs.
- Cool fluids may be absorbed more rapidly than warmer fluids.
- Children must avoid starting exercise when dehydrated – they should drink plenty of fluids prior to exercise.
- If children do not like the taste of water, they may well favour flavoured drinks such as “sports drinks” and low concentration cordial.
- If children are well hydrated, they should be able to pass a good volume of clear urine in the hour before exercise.

Specific

- Encourage children to have their own water bottle that they can regularly refill to remind them of the need to drink regularly.
- A reasonable guideline is the intake of 500ml an hour before exercise.
- A reasonable guideline is the intake of 150ml every 15 minutes during exercise.
- Children must be actively encouraged to take advantage of all breaks in play to take in fluids.
- Students should be encouraged to drink liberally after exercise to ensure full rehydration.

APPENDIX 2 - AIR QUALITY INDEX RATINGS

Exercise Category	General Recommendations	Exercise-specific Recommendations	PM2.5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$
Good to exercise	It is a good day to be outside	All forms of exercise are encouraged.	<25
Moderate Caution for those who are sensitive to air pollution	- The air is probably smoky. - Sensitive groups may experience symptoms like coughing or shortness of breath. - If you are sensitive to air pollution, spend less time outside in the smoke or dust and follow your treatment plan. - If you are worried about your symptoms, seek medical advice.	- If you are sensitive to air pollution, you may need to reduce prolonged high intensity endurance exercise (e.g. rowing, cycling, long-distance running). - Most individuals will tolerate exercise as normal, without symptoms.	25-50
Poor conditions for exercise	- The air is probably very smoky. - Sensitive groups and/or others may experience symptoms like coughing or shortness of breath. - If you are sensitive to air pollution, spend less time outside in the smoke or dust and follow your treatment plan. - If you are worried about your symptoms, seek medical advice. - Seek urgent medical help if anyone has trouble breathing or tightness in the chest. Call 000 for an ambulance.	- Consider reducing prolonged high intensity endurance activities (e.g. rowing, cycling, long-distance running). - If you are sensitive to air pollution, avoid prolonged high intensity endurance exercise (e.g. rowing, cycling, long-distance running) or move it indoors. - Intermittent exercise (e.g. tennis, netball, beach volleyball, cricket) and power activities (e.g. sprint training, javelin training, jump training, rugby skills training) may still be well-	51-100

		tolerated but athletes should be alert to symptoms. • Increase rest-to-activity ratio for intermittent exercise.	
Very poor conditions for exercise	• The air is probably very smoky. • Sensitive groups and/or others may experience symptoms like coughing or shortness of breath. • If you are sensitive to air pollution, spend less time outside in the smoke or dust and follow your treatment plan. • If you are worried about your symptoms, seek medical advice. • Seek urgent medical help if anyone has trouble breathing or tightness in the chest. Call 000 for an ambulance.	• High intensity endurance activities (e.g. rowing, cycling, long-distance running) should be avoided or moved indoors. • Intermittent exercise (e.g. tennis, netball, beach volleyball, cricket) and power activities (e.g. sprint training, javelin training, jump training, rugby skills training) may still be well-tolerated but athletes should be alert to symptoms. • Increase rest-to-activity ratio for intermittent exercise. • Any individual may be affected by exercising in smoky air at these levels. If symptoms develop, cease exercise and move indoors.	101- 150

Policy status and review

The SEISA Executive is responsible for reviewing and updating this policy at least every two years.

Approval

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Endorsed by	SEISA Executive
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