



# **VOLLEYBALL WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

## **Hot Weather Policy**

Date of Issue  
Last Reviewed  
Controlling Body

December 2013  
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VWA Board

### **Overview**

Volleyball Western Australia Hot Weather Policy has been introduced to reduce the risk of weather related illness to players, coaches, & officials involved in Volleyball Western Australia (VWA) events or activities. The policy also contains a number of Sports Medicine Australia guidelines to assist players, coaches, & officials in recognising and managing extreme heat.

Each event or competition will be declared safe to play or not by the nominated VWA Representative on a case by case basis using the below guidelines.

### **Background**

The risk of heat illness from high intensity sport is significant. It can range from cramps, through heat exhaustion to heat stroke, coma, and death.

- During a competition, a competitor may produce 15 - 20 times the heat they produce at rest. Dissipation of this excess heat is primarily achieved through sweating. If the body's ability to dissipate heat is compromised, core temperature in an average size individual may rise by one degree Celsius for every five minutes of exercise if no temperature regulating mechanisms are activated.
- If an individual's core temperature is above 40 degrees Celsius (normal 37 degrees) the risk of heat illness is significant.
- Factors which impair the body's ability to dissipate heat are:
  - o High ambient temperature
  - o Solar radiation
  - o Humidity (this compromises the efficacy of sweating)
  - o DehydrationThese factors significantly increase the risk of heat injury occurring.

### **Extreme Heat**

Extreme heat is defined as when the predicted temperature for the day exceeds 36°C (or 30 degrees WBGT). The assessment of extreme hot weather conditions will be undertaken with reference to temperature and humidity information provided by the Bureau of Metrology Website. During periods of high temperatures, all players, coaches, officials, and parents should monitor the forecasted temperature to prepare for any eventual suspension, modification or cancellation of events or activities.

When the forecast issued five days in advance of an event or activity that indicates that the expected temperature on the event day is 36°C or above, an email will be sent or a notification will be placed on the VWA Facebook page alerting participants to the possibility that events or activities may be cancelled or modified.

A follow-up will be done two days prior to the event. If the forecast still predicts a temperature of 36°C or above on the event day VWA will email all nominated teams before 7.00pm alerting them to the situation and proposing that activities may be modified or cancelled. Information will also be provided on the VWA Facebook page.

If in the event of excessive heat or weather occurs while the event/activity is in progress, a nominated VWA Representative (e.g.: WA Beach Tour – VWA Tournament Director / VWA Beach Event Officer) will determine whether to modify, suspend or cancel the event/activity.

Sports Medicine Australia advises that at any time, high intensity exercise in a hot environment, with the associated elevation of body temperature, can lead to heat illness. Heat illness in sport presents as **heat exhaustion** or the more severe **heat stroke**.

**Heat exhaustion**

- Characterised by a high heart rate, dizziness, headache, loss of endurance/skill/confusion and nausea.
- The skin may still be cool/sweating, but there will be signs of developing vasoconstriction (e.g., pale colour).

**Heat stroke**

- Characteristics similar to heat exhaustion but with dry skin, confusion, loss of consciousness or collapse.
- Heat stroke may arise in a person who has not been identified as suffering from heat exhaustion and has persisted in further activity.

**Factors that will be considered before cancelling or modifying a VWA sanctioned event**

The following Sports Medicine Australia tables and factors provide estimates of risk related to the weather with guidelines to manage activities in order to minimise heat stress.

**1. Temperature**
**A. Ambient Temperature**

- Ambient temperature is the most easily understood guide available, and is most useful on hot, dry days.

<b>Ambient temperature</b>	<b>Relative humidity</b>	<b>Risk of Heat Illness</b>	<b>Possible management for sustained physical activity</b>
15 - 20		Low	Heat illness can occur in running. Caution over-motivation.
21 - 25	Exceeds 70%	Low- moderate	Increase vigilance. Caution over-motivation.
26 – 30	Exceeds 60%	Moderate	Reduce intensity and duration of play/training. Take more breaks.
31 – 35	Exceeds 50%	High-Very High	Uncomfortable for most people. Limit intensity, take more breaks. Limit duration to less than 60 minutes per session.
36 and above	Exceeds 30%	Extreme	Very stressful for most people. Postpone to a cooler part of the day or cancellation.

**B. Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT)**

- Further guidance might be gained from the WBGT Index. The WBGT is suitable for hot, humid days.

<b>WBGT</b>	<b>Risk of thermal injury</b>	<b>Possible modifying action for vigorous sustained activity</b>
< 20	Low	Heat illness can occur in running.
21 - 25	Moderate to high	Increase vigilance. Caution over-motivation. Take more breaks.
26 - 29	High- Very high	Limit intensity. Limit duration to less than 60 minutes per session. Activities requiring moderate to intense exercise should be modified to allow best heat management strategies to be implemented.
30 and above	Extreme	Consider postponement to a cooler part of the day or cancellation

**C. Check Local Weather Conditions**

- The Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) produces Ambient and WBGT readings for many locations in Australia. The readings will be taken by a VWA Representative prior to outdoor events.  
[www.bom.gov.au/info/thermal\\_stress/index.shtml](http://www.bom.gov.au/info/thermal_stress/index.shtml)

**2. Duration and intensity of an event**

- The combination of extreme environmental conditions and sustained vigorous exercise is particularly hazardous for the athlete. The greater the intensity of the exercise, the greater the risk of heat related symptoms.
- Player and official rotation should be considered
- Reduced playing time and extended rest periods with opportunities to rehydrate during the event will help safeguard the health of participants.

**3. Age and Gender of Participant**

- Young Children are especially at risk in the heat. Children participating in an event or activity will be protected from over-exertion in hot conditions, especially when required to exercise for 30 minutes or longer. Children should not be forced to continue if they appear distressed or complain about feeling unwell.
- Veteran Participants may also cope less well with exercise in the heat. Reduced cardiac function is thought to be responsible for this effect.
- Female Participants may suffer more during exercise in the heat, due to their greater percentage of natural body fat.

**4. Time of Day for the Event**

- Where possible, the hottest part of the day will be avoided (usually 11:00am - 3:00pm).
- Scheduling events and activities outside this time, or providing extended breaks during this time, will be considered throughout any VWA sanctioned competition, training or event.

**5. Venue**

- Considerations to modification or cancellation will take into effect if the event or activity is played on sand (e.g. Alcohol. Think Again Beach Volleyball Tour) with a high surface heat or at any other outdoor events/activities.

**7. Predisposed medical conditions**

- VWA will ask athletes, umpires, officials or volunteers to advise if they have a medical condition during registration of events.
- Examples of illness that will put the participant or official at a high risk of heat illness include asthma, diabetes, pregnancy, heart conditions and epilepsy.
- An overweight and unconditioned athlete will generally also be susceptible to heat illness.

**First Aid**

Any person with symptoms of heat illness shall immediately cease participating in a VWA sanctioned activity. They shall have immediate first aid treatment including Strip/Soak/Fan.

- lay down in a cool place with circulating air;
- strip off any excess clothing;
- soak with water;
- vigorously fan;
- ice placed on neck, groin and armpits;
- give cool water if conscious.

If a person remains seriously ill, confused, vomiting or shows signs of altered consciousness and ambulance should be called immediately and seek medical help.

**VWA Event Organisers Checklist**

If the following conditions are present for the event:

- The event is to be held between December and February during daylight hours.
- The weather forecast is for temperatures above 30 degrees C or humidity is above 50%.
- Children or athletes of unknown fitness or acclimatisation are participating.

The following measures are recommended:

- Check the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) for current Ambient and WBGT readings.
- Have a thermometer at the field of play to measure ambient temperature during the competition.
- Alert teams to the conditions and to changes in the events, and encourage teams to pace their games accordingly.
- Adopt fixtures that provide sufficient rest periods and longer or more frequent water breaks.
- Schedule a major break (at least 1 hour, e.g. lunch) during the hottest part of the day (11am-3pm) or ensure athletes do not have fixture games back to back during this time.
- Provide shade adjacent to all courts where possible or alert teams if they should bring their own shade.
- Have water available within 100m of all playing venues, or provide teams with the means to collect and transport sufficient water for each game.
- Provide sports drinks for purchase by the athletes or alert athletes that they have the capacity to bring their own.
- Encourage athletes, officials, volunteers or staff to wear clothing that minimise heat storage and enhance sweat evaporation.
- Provide or identify an available water source for athletes to spray or douse themselves.
- Have trained First Aid personnel available to treat any heat related illness.
- Provide access to ice and a first aid kit in the event of illness.
- Report any incidents of heat illness to Volleyball WA.
- Provide Sun Screen to all competitors (as per the VWA Sun Protection Policy).

**Other Extreme Weather Conditions**

- Other conditions that will be considered by the nominated VWA Representative when considering if to modify or cancel an event will include extreme wind, thunder (see VWA Lightning Policy) and rain.