EXTREME WEATHER STANDARD

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South Australian Little Athletics Association

EXTREME WEATHER STANDARD

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Extreme Weather Standard Foundation

Purpose	This Policy aims to provide a position statement to assist in providing a safe environment in regard to weather events, and to reduce the likelihood of illness or injuries occurring as a result of extreme weather conditions.
Scope	**In Scope:** This Policy covers weather events such as heat, sunshine, cold, rain, storms and winds. All SALAA and affiliated clubs events are covered including: • State Competitions. • Club Meets. • Training Sessions.
Intended User	Intended users of the are: • SALAA Board, Management Team, Employees. • Affiliated Clubs. • Members.

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1. Extreme Weather Standard Expectations

1.1 Responsibilities and Accountabilities

Principles

The Principles of this standard are:

- To identify risk factors associated with extreme weather conditions.
- To implement changes and mitigation strategies to ensure athletes and others safety.
- To provide guidance on cancelation and modifications of events.

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Responsibilities and Delegations

The SALAA Board is responsible for:

- Oversight of the Extreme Weather Standard.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is responsible for:

- Cancellation or alteration of state events and SALAA controlled events.
- Liaising with relevant staff when implementing changes or cancellations to events.

Delegated Staff Member(s) is responsible for:

- Planning and implementing SALAA events.
- Monitoring weather conditions for SALAA controlled events.
- Advising on changes or cancellations to events.

SALAA Staff, Members and Volunteers are responsible for:

- Supporting the CEO and delegated staff member(s) in implementing changes or cancellations due to extreme weather events.

SALAA Affiliated Clubs are responsible for:

- Must comply with the parameters of this document when running any activities.
- Must document a risk assessment where extreme weather events are forecasted to determine any additional controls required or the possibility of cancelling events.
- Must record any incidents that occur in connection with adverse weather events (as per the Club Incident Reporting System in the SALAA Clubs Hub).

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2. Extreme Weather Procedure Details

2.1 Extreme Weather

Extreme Weather Event	Extreme weather event refers to "an occurrence of a value of a weather or climate variable beyond a threshold that lies near the end of the range of observations for the variable". Examples include extremely hot days and heatwaves (three or more consecutive days of unusually high maximum and minimum temperatures), very heavy rainfall, hailstorms, and tropical cyclones.
Duty of Care	Competition and event organisers have a duty of care to athletes, officials and others to take action to minimise the risk of heat stress or threat of illness or injury participating in activities.
Implementation	To implement this standard responsible and authorised persons must closely and regularly monitor weather forecasts and conditions to comply with the following guidelines when conducting or managing extreme weather at events, competitions and activities.

2.2 Hot Weather

Temperature Determination	The forecast maximum temperature referred to in this section is that issued by the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) at 4:10pm CDT two days (2) prior to competition (i.e., 4:10pm Friday for a competition to be conducted on a Sunday). Members are encouraged to refer to the Bureau's website which can be found at www.bom.gov.au. Should any subsequent forecast change the predicted temperature, the program will not be changed again.
Cancellation	If the predicted temperature is **41°C** or above the event will be cancelled and rescheduled to the next available date. Little Athletics SA retains the right to cancel any competition at its discretion if it is deemed that the environmental conditions, such as extreme humidity, present a serious health risk to athletes and officials, even if temperatures falls within the acceptable levels detailed within this document.
Alteration to Programs	If the predicted temperature is between **37°C and 40°C**, then the competition will be conducted to a Hot Weather Program.
Monitoring of Track Conditions	During days of extreme heat, track conditions will be monitored, and further changes may be made to the program to suit the conditions.
Suggested Actions	Other responses to be used during heat include: • Promotion of hydration before, during and after events. • Use of shaded areas (temporary or permanent). • Encourage small and vulnerable children (predisposed medical conditions) to carefully consider their level of participation. • Use of sun protective clothing. • Monitor all children for signs of heat illness.

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2.3 Thunderstorms

Thunderstorm Risk	Thunderstorms present a significant risk to athletes, coaches, and officials when they occur in the vicinity of training or competition and event locations.
Monitor Forecasts	Prior to and during training, competition or events, the BOM weather forecast should be monitored, and in particular the presence of a severe weather warning indicating a change of thunderstorms.
Cancellation or Postponement	If a severe weather warning is in effect or if thunderstorms are predicted, cancellation or postponement should be considered.
When to Seek Shelter	If the time between seeing a lightning flash and hearing a thunderclap is less than 30 seconds seek shelter (this is flash to band ration is calculated by counting the time in seconds between a visible lightning bolt (flash) and the audible thunderclap (bang).
Where to Shelter	Shelter inside a substantial building such as an office block, school, club room or house. Do not seek shelter under a tree (or group of trees), in the open in small open structures or in tin sheds. Sheltering in vehicles is appropriate however care should be taken not to contact any metal surfaces.
When to Resume Outdoor Activities	Wait a minimum of 30 minutes after the last sound of thunder is heard before resuming outdoor activities.
Thunderstorm Asthma	Thunderstorms and weather changes can trigger asthma attacks. It is important to monitor persons with pollen allergy during these conditions however others can also be affected.

Suggested Actions	Publicly advise that conditions are being monitored an update will occur as required. Ensure suitable shelter is available in the case of thunderstorms occurring.

2.4 Strong Winds and Storms

Safety of Surfaces	Wind may create additional hazards in regard to trees, branches or other materials becoming projectiles. Rain also needs to be considered in relation to its impact on the safety of the athletic surfaces. Track surfaces will need to be assessed at the time and events modified/discontinued if deemed unsafe. In particular, focus should be given to: • High Jump. • Long / Triple Jump.
Monitor Forecasts	Prior to and during training, competition or events, the BOM weather forecast should be monitored, and in particular the presence of a severe weather warning indicating strong winds. • If a severe weather warning is in effect or if strong winds are predicted, cancelling or postponing the training session, competition or event should be strongly considered.
Standards	Where wind speed > 40km per hour are forecast consideration should be given to calling events off. This aligns to the Beaufort scale 6 – Strong Breeze. A risk assessment must be documented at this point for evens to go ahead. No outside events should occur in winds greater than 50km/hr. Wind gust strength should be considered with any risk assessment in addition to the actual wind strength.

Marquees and Structures in High Winds	Each structure will have a wind rating, should the maximum wind speed of the structure be reached they must be dismantled. Essential to the wind rating is that the structure is secured properly to withstand the forecast winds.
Hail	All hailstorms present some risk to athletes in an open playing field, and the size and intensity of the storm can change dramatically in a short period of time. All play should be suspended during hailstorms so that athletes and officials can seek suitable shelter.
Suggested Actions	Consider: • Alteration of athletic programs. • Considering moving structures and equipment away from trees and foliage. • Tie down (or addition of weights) of marquees and any other free-standing objects. • Dismantling marquees. • Sheltering inside a building.

2.5 Air Quality

Poor Air Quality	Smoke and poor air quality can present a health risk. Current health status and previous medical conditions can play a major factor on how big an impact air quality can have on an individual.
Smokey Conditions	PM2.5 is also by far the most important air pollutant in smoky conditions.

Determining Air Quality

Air quality in South Australia can be obtained through EPA: Air quality monitoring.

The following table assists in decision making about exercising in smoke affected environments (AIS)

PM2.5 µg/m³	Exercise category
< 25	Good to exercise
25 – 50	Moderate
51 – 100	Poor conditions for exercise
101 – 150	Very poor conditions for exercise
> 150	Likely to be hazardous to exercise outdoors

For more information refer to AIS smoke pollution and exercise.

Suggested Actions

Monitor the health of athletes, officials and volunteers (particularly those with pre-existing conditions).

Consider cancellation of events.

2.6 Heat Related Illness Signs Symptoms and Treatments

Heat Related Illness

Heat-related injuries or illnesses pose a risk to athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers and spectators at competitions and trainings.

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Early Signs

Early signs of dehydration and heat-related illness include:

- Sweating heavily.
- Having a raised body temperature.
- Feeling dizzy or faint.
- Feeling tired and lethargic.
- Reduced appetite.
- Feeling thirsty.
- Being irritable.
- Twitching or having painful muscle cramps in the arms, legs or abdomen.

Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustions is a mild to moderate illness caused by water or salt depletion, that results from exposure to high heat or strenuous physical exercise.

The signs and symptoms of heat exhaustion include (in addition to those above):

- Headaches.
- Having a raised body temperature.
- Sweating heavily.
- Fatigue, weakness and restlessness.
- Nausea and vomiting.
- Weak, rapid pulse.
- Poor coordination.
- Anxiety.

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Heat Stroke

Heatstroke is a severe illness where a person's temperature is greater than 40°C, and the person is experiencing delirium (confusion), convulsions, or coma, resulting from exposure to high heat or strenuous physical exercise.

The signs and symptoms of heatstroke include:

- Headache, dizziness, nausea, vomiting and confusion.
- Having flushed, hot and unusually dry skin.
- Being extremely thirsty.
- Having a dry, swollen tongue.
- having a sudden rise in body temperature to more than 40°C.
- Being disoriented or delirious.
- Slurred speech.
- Being aggressive or behaving strangely.
- Convulsions, seizures or coma.
- May be sweating and skin may feel deceptively cool.
- Rapid pulse.

Heatstroke is an extreme medical emergency, call 000 immediately if any of the above signs are noted.

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Treatment for Heat Related Illness

Treatment for heat illness will depend upon the severity.

- Stop the activity, go to a cool, shaded place and lie down with legs supported and slightly lifted.
- Slowly sip plenty of water or fruit juice.
- Try to cool down with a fan or an air-conditioner, cool water sprayed on skin or by having a cool shower or bath.
- Reduce body temperature by putting cool packs under the armpits, in the groin and on the back of the neck.
- Use massage to ease spasms or cramps, then use ice packs.

Seek medical treatment if symptoms persist for more than an hour.

3. Definitions and References

3.1 Definitions

Damaging Winds	Damaging winds are defined as sustained winds of gale force (63 km/h) or more or wind gusts of 90 km/h or more.
Wind Gusts	Wind gusts are short-term and strong air movements, over and above the wind speed.

3.2 References

Legislation	Work Health & Safety Act 2012. Work Health & Safety Regulations 2012.
Sports Medicine Australia	Sports Medicine Australia (2021); Extreme Heat Policy.