



**WHITTLESEA CITY
LITTLE ATHLETICS CENTRE
CENTRE NO. 112**

HEAT AND WET WEATHER POLICY

Revised June 2025



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Introduction



This policy outlines Whittlesea City Little Athletics Centre (WCLAC) approach to protecting the safety of participants during hot weather, wet or extreme weather events. Hot weather creates risks that participants may experience a form of exertional heat illness, such as muscle cramps, fainting, heat exhaustion and even heat stroke.

Vicsport (2024) defines exertional heat illness as:

A term used for medical conditions caused by exposure to heat during physical activity. It includes the following conditions which can occur during participation in sport or active recreation:

- *Muscle cramps*
- *Heat Syncope (Fainting)*
- *Heat exhaustion*
- *Heat stroke*

The conduct of Little Athletics competition at any level requires contributions from a significant number of volunteers, who may be required assist for multiple hours at a time. The age of our volunteers for any given event may vary significantly, from teenagers through to seniors. Accordingly, the physical capability of volunteers, and their resilience when exposed to extreme heat conditions may also vary significantly.

The aim of WCLAC's Heat Policy is to:

- Protect the health, safety and wellbeing of everyone who participates, including athletes, volunteers, families, coaches and officials.
- Detail strategies for participation to continue with appropriate mitigation and risk management strategies in place.
- Provide guidance to event, competition and training organisers regarding the effective management of hot and extreme weather conditions.

WCLAC is bound by the Little Athletics Victoria (LA Vic) Heat Policy ([LAVic-Heat-Policy-2024-v1.pdf](#))

LAVic is committed to ensuring our sport is accessible to everyone and we take every opportunity to provide the highest level of service to all who engage with our sport. LAVic has a duty of care to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of all engaged in our sport, during warm to very hot weather and heatwaves.

When there is a risk of exertional heat illness, LAVic commits to acting in the best interest of all participants by implementing mitigation strategies. LAVic's administrators, including employees, Board members, Region committee members, affiliated Centres and Clubs, must closely and regularly monitor weather forecasts and comply with this policy when conducting or managing sanctioned events, especially, training and competitions.

All competition decisions for adverse weather will be made by a sub-committee consisting of at least three of the following Centre Executive and General Committee members; President, Vice-President, Competition Director, Arena Manager, Chief of Officials or Child Protection Officer.

If adverse weather conditions lead to the adjustment, suspension or cancellation of a competition program, clubs and families will be notified through email and social media including WhatsApp and Facebook. This will occur in a timely manner in the lead up to the competition event and on the day, approximately 60 minutes before the scheduled start time of the program.

Any adjustment, suspension or cancellation of a live competition event will be communicated immediately to all present at the venue including via the above social media channels.

Parent / Guardian Obligations



Ultimately, it is the little athlete/s parent or guardian who have overall responsibility for ensuring that it is appropriate for their child/children to compete in little athletics during extreme heat and wet weather conditions. This includes being dressed appropriately, hydrated, sun smart etc.

WCLAC implores parents and guardians to take all necessary precautions to ensure their child/children are managing their own health and well-being including any pre-existing health conditions in the lead up to, during, and post competition or training.

Young Children & Hot Weather



Young children are especially at risk in hot weather. Prior to puberty, a child's sweating mechanism, which is essential for effective cooling of the body, is poorly developed. Also, a child's ratio between weight and surface area is such that the body absorbs heat rapidly. Sensible measures, as outlined in this policy, need to be taken to protect Little Athletes from over-exertion in hot weather.

A heat illness in sport may present itself in a variety of forms including heat exhaustion and the more severe heat stroke.

Signs of heat illness

Some common signs of heat illness that may be seen in Little Athletes are listed below in order of increasing seriousness/severity:

- Dizziness (light headedness),
- Complaining of being hot and appearing distressed,
- Appearing exhausted or weak (fatigued); needing help to stand,

- Stumbling, unsteady, clumsy, falling,
- Collapse – unable to stand; and usually accompanied by some degree of confusion / drowsiness,
- Collapse - altered consciousness ranging from confusion, drowsiness through to unconsciousness.

NOTE: Some of these signs are also seen in children who have pushed themselves and are distressed at the end of their event, but are not due to a heat illness.

Treatment of a Heat Illness

Participants who show any signs of a heat illness should be stopped and removed from the activity immediately.

- Immediately call for First Aid to assist the athlete,
- Lay the person down to rest in a cool shaded area with some air circulation,
- Raise the legs and pelvis if possible,
- Remove excess clothing,
- Cool the person by wetting, misting or spraying the skin with water and fanning vigorously,
- Apply ice packs to the neck, armpits and groin from the first aid team and cool room,
- Give them cool water if they are conscious.

If the person does not quickly recover and remains seriously ill, confused, vomiting or shows signs of altered consciousness, call an ambulance immediately and seek medical help. Continue cooling the person.

NOTE: On advice from the medical officer to the appropriate referee or manager, an athlete may be removed from an event if they appear to be suffering from a heat illness.

Risk Factors

The risk factors for heat illness that have been identified as relevant to Little Athletics activities are:

- Ambient temperature/humidity,
- The type of event and more particularly the number of events competed in at a Event,
- Two-day (versus one-day) Events,
- A lack of adequate fluid intake on the day,
- Direct sun exposure on the day,
- Medical issues such as an illness and specific at-risk diseases (diabetes and cystic fibrosis),
- The type of track; there is a trend towards a higher risk of heat illness on a synthetic track compared to grass track,
- Heat wave conditions including thermal heat in surrounding areas.

Managing Hot Weather



Heat illness can occur across all events and at temperature levels well below those considered to be a risk. Heat exhaustion has occurred at Little Athletics Events in events from 100m to 3000m, in walks and in field events. This reality highlights the importance at any event of pursuing a range of risk minimisation strategies.

Education

Opportunities should be taken to educate athletes and parents/guardians about the importance of sun safety, avoiding dehydration and managing hot weather conditions. Such messages should be regularly reinforced.

Preparation

It is recommended that if hot weather is likely to occur that parents/guardians should ensure that athletes are sufficiently hydrated in the lead up to the activity and proactive measures are taken to cope with the anticipated conditions. These may include:

- Packing sufficient drinks and making them readily available.
- Taking iced or frozen drinks to the activity.
- Taking ice packs that can be held or massaged against the skin for a cooling effect.
- Packing towels and face washers that can be soaked with water during the day and draped around shoulders and necks.
- Taking personal spray bottles and/or battery-operated fans.
- Taking umbrellas and other shade structures in case there is not adequate shade at the venue.

Shade

Event organisers must ensure that shade is provided at all field events, marshalling and finish areas. It should also be provided in other areas where participants, staff, officials and volunteers could potentially be waiting for long periods of time unprotected from the sun. In hot weather, where possible, athletes who have been marshalled should be kept in the shade **or cool rooms** as long as possible prior to their events and returned to the shade if there are any unexpected delays.

On hot days, parents/guardians should ensure that athletes stay out of the sun and rest as much as possible while not competing.

Drinks and Fluids

Younger children (<11-13yrs) generally do not appreciate what feeling thirsty is. Older children (13-17yrs) usually do appreciate thirst, but this may not result in an appropriate response on the day under the stress of competition. Body fluids are lost through sweat, so young athletes should be encouraged to drink plenty of fluids before, during and after exercise. More fluids than normal will need to be consumed by participants in hot weather due to their increased sweating rate. Parents/guardians must

take a major role in the monitoring of fluid intake, ensuring enough fluid intake and encouraging the child's involvement in managing the issue for themselves.

Young athletes should be taught to drink before they get thirsty, rather than when they get thirsty but also need to take care not to over-hydrate. The aim should be to drink enough to replace lost fluids, but not more than that. Parents/guardians should ensure that athletes take adequate fluids out with them to an event.

WCLAC organisers should ensure that:

- Children bring water to/from events, and that water stations are numerous and available to all.
- Additional water is provided so as to allow participants to wet their face, clothes and hair to assist the cooling process in the cooling room on days >34 degrees.

Attire

All athletes should wear sun safe attire. Clothing should be light-coloured, light weight, loose fitting and well ventilated to allow easy evaporation of sweat from the skin. It should also provide adequate protection from the sun. Whilst exposed to the sun (except when competing) a well-ventilated broad brim hat should be worn. All officials and volunteers must be seen to be setting a sun smart example. During activities, they are encouraged to wear collared shirts, hats and sunglasses.

Sunscreen

Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring that their child applies sufficient amounts of sunscreen to protect them whilst they are involved in a Little Athletics activity. Sunscreen should also be provided and located in and around the competition arena.

Public Announcements

It is recommended that during competition, public/social announcements be regularly made reminding those at the event to keep drinking water, apply sunscreen and remain in the shade wherever possible.

Other

In hot weather the following individuals may be at increased risk of heat related illness, and appropriate precautions should be implemented, and their condition monitored on a frequent basis. The group includes those that:

- Are not fit or who are overweight
- Are not used to hot weather or had sufficient time to acclimatise to such weather
- Have recently been ill. Athletes who have experienced a high temperature, infection, diarrhoea or vomiting should not participate and should be taken home.
- Have a medical condition that that may predispose them to heat illness such as cystic fibrosis or diabetes.

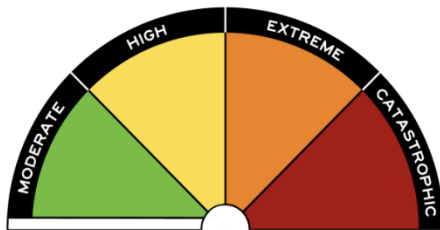
In hot weather, parents and guardians of athletes at increased risk should be made aware that they can carefully consider whether or not it is appropriate for the athlete to be participating in exercise.

Fire Danger Ratings



No centre activity, competition or training will occur on a declared Catastrophic fire rating day.

A Total Fire Ban declaration will require the Executive Committee to review the program in accordance with the expected and live weather to determine whether the program is adjusted, suspended or cancelled.



MODERATE Plan and prepare	HIGH Be ready to act
EXTREME Take action now to protect life and property	CATASTROPHIC For your survival, leave bushfire risk areas

TOTAL FIRE BAN



High Winds



High winds have the potential to create dangerous conditions for athletes, spectators and officials. Where these winds create unreasonable risks within the track area activities may need to be suspended by relevant Officials responsible for conducting and managing athletic events. Hazards may include furniture or fixtures disturbed, items being blown onto the field or track, or athletes health threatened by the force of the wind.

Air Quality



Should the Air Quality measured by EPA Victoria at the Macleod station be identified as "Poor", "Very Poor" or "Hazardous", competition will not commence and if in progress, will be stopped. Air Quality is important particularly to those who may be asthmatic or suffer from other breathing conditions.

Wet Weather



If it is raining heavily, and there are safety concerns, activities may be discontinued for a period of time and conditions reassessed to determine whether activities should continue.

If safe to continue, WCLAC will attempt to implement a wet weather program. The attached Wet Weather Program is indicative of the events that will be offered in a Wet Weather program. Further, if field events are permissible and safe to be undertaken, mitigation strategies to minimise impacts of the field events include covering important areas at the field event sites prior to competition, setting up marquees to keep areas dry or sweeping run up areas after every attempt by an athlete.

If a hailstorm occurs during a carnival or event, all activities should be suspended or cancelled, and participants should seek suitable protective cover.

Relevant officials responsible for conducting and managing athletics events must take the necessary steps to ensure that the track surface, field surface and surrounds are safe for use. It is essential that the relevant people inspect the site for each discipline (including lines and surrounds) to determine its suitability for use before any activities are commenced or resumed.

Lightning



In Australia, approximately 25% of people killed by lightning are playing sport. When thunderstorms threaten, the relevant officials responsible for conducting and managing athletics events must assess the situation ensuring the safety of athletes, officials and spectators.

Generally, when an individual can see lightning and/or hear thunder he/she is already at risk. Relevant officials responsible for conducting and managing athletics events must ensure that all athletes, officials and spectators where possible are inside a safe shelter during a thunderstorm.

Lightning Facts

- All thunderstorms produce lightning and are dangerous
- Any time thunder is heard, the thunderstorm is close enough to pose an immediate lightning threat to your location
- When thunderstorms are in the area but not overhead, the lightning threat can still exist even if it is sunny overhead, not raining, or when clear sky is visible

The 30/30 rule lightning

By the time the flash-to-bang count approaches 30 seconds – all individuals should already be inside a safe shelter.

Wait at least 30 minutes after the last sound (thunder) or observation of lightning and ensure conditions are completely safe before leaving shelter to resume activities.

Each time lightning is observed or thunder is heard the 30 minutes clock should be re-started.

Cancellation or Postponement



The following outlines the temperatures at which Little Athletics activities/events may be suspended, postponed or cancelled. WCLAC reminds all parties that they must act responsibly and operate in accordance with the requirements of this policy.

It must be remembered that children are especially at risk in the heat and are at a greater risk of suffering from heat illness. A common-sense approach is encouraged with consideration of the comfort and well-being of all individuals including participants, officials and spectators, and if deemed appropriate, postponement or cancellation of events should occur at temperature levels below the designated cut-offs (ambient temperatures).

- In warm weather ambient temperature readings from the BOM should be checked at 15-minute intervals from either the Viewbank or Essendon sites,
- Once the temperature reaches or exceeds 26 degrees Celsius, the LA Vic Heat policy will be activated, public announcements should be frequent, and plenty of water and shade should be made available to the athletes and officials,
- Thought should be given to the timing of at-risk events at 30-33 degrees Celsius. Consideration should be given to adjusting events to cooler parts of the day or postponing endurance distance events when it becomes cooler,
- Cool/Call room facilities should be open with cold water available,
- At 34 degrees Celsius endurance events >400m (including combined events) should be rescheduled to the beginning of the competition program, and the first aid team provided with ice/towels/electrolytes at their disposal,
- At 40+ degrees all track events should be scheduled at the beginning of the program and field events monitored until conditions improve,
- If the ambient temperatures reach the levels in the table provided, all activities will be reviewed, adjusted, suspended, cancelled or postponed until the temperature falls below the levels listed. This does not only take athletes into account, but also the officials, volunteers and spectators,
- Postponement or cancellation of events may be appropriate even in circumstances falling outside these levels.

WCLAC recognises that heat illness can be a risk at temperature levels below the general threshold and that there are many factors at work such as:

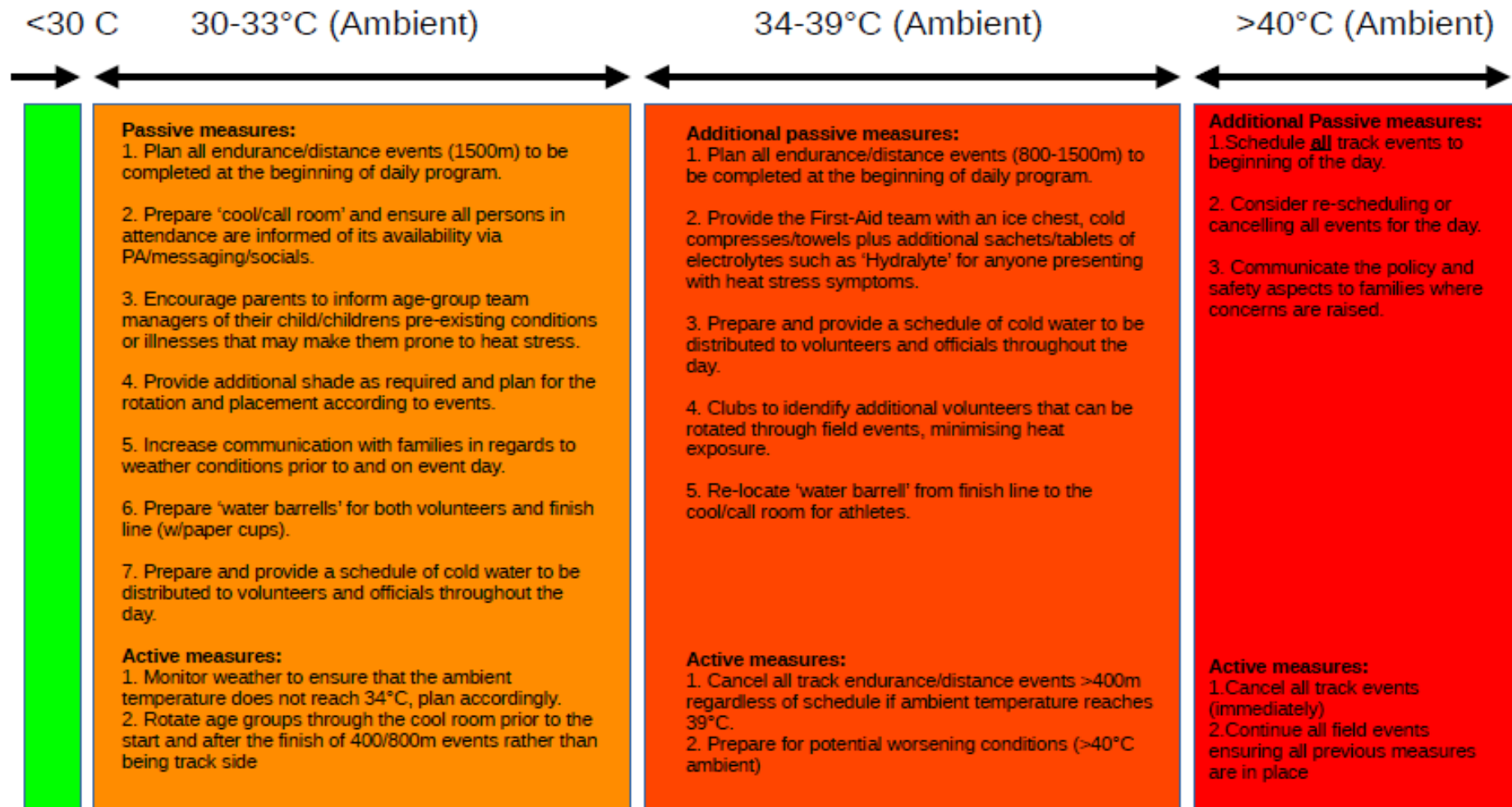
- unusual levels of humidity
- “heat wave” conditions
- variations from the average temperature for the time of year
- thunderstorm asthma
- winds

Questions or concerns

If you have any questions relating to the WCLAC Heat and Wet Weather Policy, please contact the Secretary at: whittleseacity@lavic.com.au.



WCLAC Simplified Heat Index



- Ambient temperate index used for simplicity and allowing for SE geographic location of WCLAC.
- Factors such as heat wave conditions, age of participants, and radiated heat from track surface have been considered.
- Temperature to be monitored by competition director(s) in 15 minute intervals using nearby temperature readings from both Viewbank and Essendon Airport. <http://www.bom.gov.au/products/IDV65079.shtml>
- Passive measure must be activated **prior** to the competition/training day (including combined events) based upon predicated temperatures
- Active measures must be activated on the day of competition/training when required (including combined events) based upon actual temperatures.

WCLAC Wet Weather Program



WCLAC WET WEATHER PROGRAM

GIRLS U6		ON TRACK		70M - BS		100M - BS	
BOYS U6		ON TRACK		70M - BS		100M - BS	
GIRLS U7		70M - BS		ON TRACK		100M - BS	
BOYS U7		70M - BS		100M - BS		ON TRACK	
GIRLS U8		70M - BS		100M - BS		200M - FS	
BOYS U8		70M - BS		100M - BS		200M - FS	
GIRLS U9		70M - BS		200M - FS		800M	
BOYS U9		70M - BS		200M - FS		800M	
GIRLS U10		70M - BS		200M - FS		800M	
BOYS U10		70M - BS		200M - FS		800M	
GIRLS U11		100M - FS		200M - FS		800M	
BOYS U11		100M - FS		200M - FS		800M	
GIRLS U12		100M - FS		200M - FS		800M	
BOYS U12		100M - FS		200M - FS		800M	
GIRLS U13		100M - FS		200M - FS		800M	
BOYS U13		100M - FS		200M - FS		800M	
GIRLS U14		100M - FS		200M - FS		800M	
BOYS U14		100M - FS		200M - FS		800M	
GIRLS U15,16 &17		100M - FS		200M - FS		800M	
BOYS U15,16 &17		100M - FS		200M - FS		800M	