



EXTREME WEATHER CONDITIONS POLICY

Ovens and Murray District Swimming Association (O&MDSA) acknowledges it has a responsibility and duty of care to ensure the safety of participants, officials and spectators attending any of its competitions. The Extreme Weather Conditions Policy has been developed in consideration of the guidelines produced by Sports Medicine Australia (SMA) and VICSPORT Hot Weather Guidelines for hot weather and other extreme weather conditions such as electrical storms, dust storms or bush fires.

The following recommended guidelines have been produced by O&MDSA, to assist decisions considering modifying, cancelling or postponing competitions.

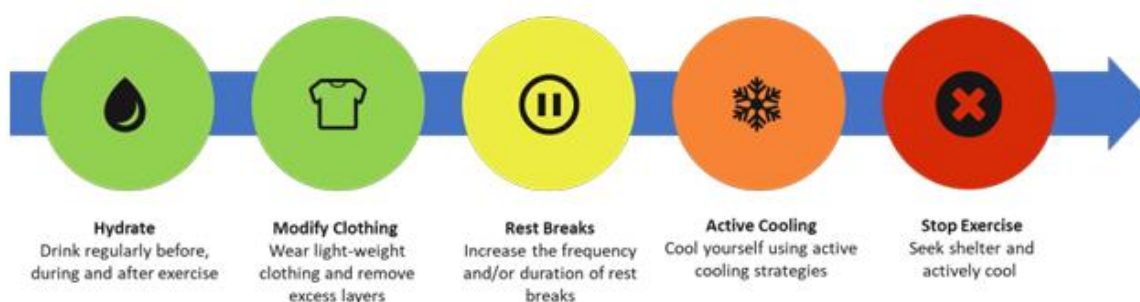
In addition to the Extreme Weather Conditions Policy the following resources and checklists are available from the Sports Medicine Australia website [Policies and Guidelines | Sports Medicine Australia \(sma.org.au\)](#) and VICSPORT website [Hot Weather Resources — Vicsport](#)

HOT WEATHER

All participants need to ensure that they are prepared to encounter extreme weather conditions during the summer months in our region. Also note weather forecasts are a **guideline only** for predicted temperatures. In the event of hot weather plan ahead to ensure you are able to take the most appropriate precautions to stay safe when exercising in the heat.

In the event of forecast extreme temperatures O&MDSA will liaise with the hosting club and pool to ensure there are adequate measures in place for shade and hydration for officials, timekeepers, competitors and spectators. During the competition extra time may be taken for breaks for officials to rehydrate and shelter from the heat. Where possible O&MDSA will liaise with the pool management to commence the competition earlier in the day. Clubs and individuals are encouraged to bring shade shelters for protection of their swimmers and parents from the sun.

AT A GLANCE – MITIGATING HEAT STRESS RISK



Whenever exercise or sport is being carried out in the heat, irrespective of the heat stress risk level, recognising the signs and symptoms of heat-related illness is essential for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all participants. Heat-related illnesses represent a spectrum of disorders, ranging from mild symptoms to a life-threatening illness. The health impacts of heat-related illness can be a direct result of an increase in core temperature or the result of the strain on the heart associated with defending the rise in body temperature.

The symptoms and signs of heat-related illness and the immediate management procedures are summarised in the Table below:

	Heat Exhaustion / Syncope	Exertional Heat Stroke (EHS)
<p>Symptoms <i>(what the person might feel)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headache • Dizziness • Weakness • Nausea • Vomiting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brain symptoms including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Confusion ○ Agitation • Symptoms can develop rapidly • EHS is a medical emergency
<p>Signs <i>(what you might see)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fainting • Raised Heart Rate • Raised Blood Pressure • Core temperature usually <40 ° C • Absence of brain symptoms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brain symptoms including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Confusion ○ Unsteadiness ○ Aggressive or irrational behaviour ○ Altered level of consciousness, seizures, coma • Raised Heart rate • Raised breathing rate • Lowered blood pressure • Core temperature usually <40 ° C
<p>Immediate Management <i>(actions you may take)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move to shade and cool • Remove excess clothing • Apply lots of water to the skin • Rehydrate with fluids • Lie on back with legs elevated • Observe symptoms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ABC (airways, breathing, circulation) • Call an ambulance as this is a medical emergency • Lay the person down • Cool the body with ice and water under armpits and groin • Do not give the person fluids to drink • Stop cooling if the person starts shivering

THUNDERSTORMS

Thunderstorms present a significant risk to all participants when they occur in the vicinity of competitions which occur in and around an open area such as a swimming pool. Storms can also develop quickly.

It is widely recognised that a significant lightning threat extends outward of the thunderstorm cloud for approximately 10-15 kilometres. As a general guide, the ability to hear thunder is usually an indication that the storm is within 10-15 kilometres of your location. When a storm is within this range, appropriate action should be taken to minimise the danger to participants. In the event of the threat of a thunderstorm, the following actions should occur:

Prior to and during competitions the BOM weather forecast will be monitored, and the presence of a severe weather warning indicates a chance of thunderstorms. Thunderstorms in general are often predicted but do not eventuate in the local area.

If thunder is heard, or a thunderstorm occurs during the competitions the following action will be taken:

- Pool staff have overall control of any decisions, in conjunction with O&MDSA.
- O&MDSA will ask all participants to immediately leave the outdoor pool area and proceed to sheltered undercover areas, or indoors if available at the venue.
- Evacuation from the outdoor pool to sheltered undercover areas or indoors will be coordinated through the PA where available.
- Individuals should shelter inside away from windows and avoid contact with metal surfaces until the storm has passed
- Any contact with electrical equipment and wiring should be avoided during an electrical storm
- Corded phones should not be used during an electrical storm. Mobile phones and cordless phones are safe to use.
- Once an electrical storm has passed, activity will not resume for another 30 minutes as electrical charges can linger in clouds after the storm has passed.
- At this time, the pool staff and O&MDSA will assess the area for damage before determining whether competition should resume.
- No individuals will be permitted to return to the outdoor pool until all clear is given by the pool staff and O&MDSA.

STRONG WINDS & DUST STORMS

Strong winds present a safety risk to all participants in and around the pool environment. In the event of the threat of the occurrence of strong winds, the following actions should occur:

- Prior to and during the competition, the BOM weather forecast will be monitored, and 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 competition will be strongly considered.
- If strong winds are predicted, it will be advisable to take down all temporary tent-like structures to avoid the risk of injury or damage.

If strong winds occur during the competition the following action will be taken:

- O&MDSA will ask all participants to immediately take down all temporary tent-like structures to avoid the risk of injury or damage then immediately leave the outdoor pool area and proceed to sheltered undercover areas, or indoors if available at the venue.
- Evacuation from the outdoor pool to sheltered undercover areas or indoors will be coordinated through the PA where available.
- Individuals should shelter inside away from windows until the threat has passed
- Once strong winds have ceased, pool staff and O&MDSA will assess the pool area for damage before determining whether competition should resume.
- No individuals will be permitted to return to the outdoor pool until all clear is given by the pool staff and O&MDSA.

LOW VISIBILITY

Low visibility can present a safety risk to all participants in and around the pool environment. In the event of the threat resulting in low visibility, the following actions should occur:

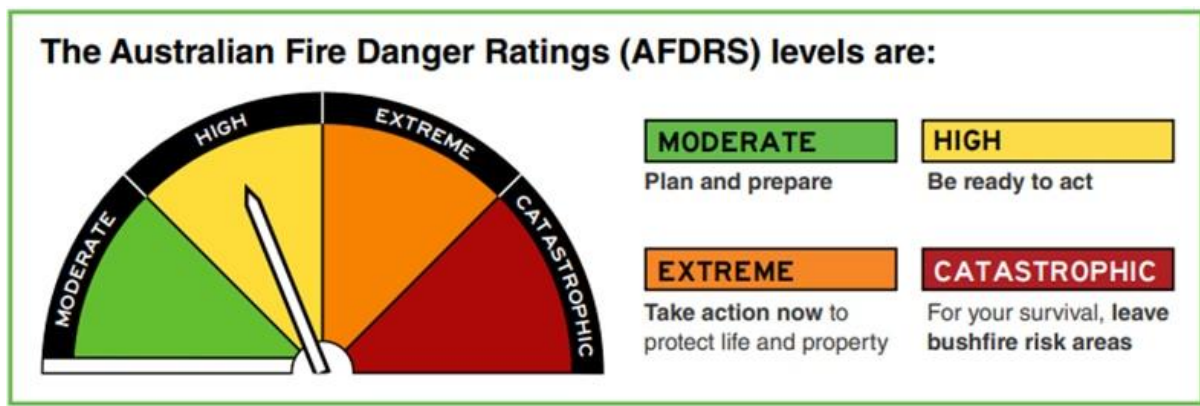
- Prior and during the event, the BOM weather forecast will be monitored, and the presence of a severe weather warning indicating conditions of low visibility
- If a severe weather warning is in effect or if low visibility is predicted, cancelling or postponing the competition should be strongly considered.

If conditions create a situation of low visibility during the competition that reduced visibility to less than 50 metres, the following action will be taken:

- O&MDSA will immediately cease the competition.
- Where possible, announcements will be made via a PA system.
- Once visibility has improved to beyond 50 metres, O&MDSA will decide whether to continue with or cancel competition.

BUSHFIRES

Bushfires can present a safety risk to all participants in and around the pool environment and to surrounding areas. O&MDSA will monitor CFA warnings and recommendations for weather conditions and the level of threat to safety in the event of a bushfire in the area. If the area in which the competition is to be held has been put on/received either **Extreme or Catastrophic** Fire Danger Rating the competition will be cancelled.



For more information about the Australian Fire Danger Rating System and further explanations see the following website: [Australian fire danger ratings explained - ABC Emergency](#).

INTENDED USE

This document is intended to be used as a **guide only**. Ultimately, every person is different, and individuals will respond to participation in physical activity in extreme conditions in different ways. To this end, individuals are encouraged to assess their level of participation in the competition to best avoid illness or injury in extreme weather conditions.

In the event of any changes to competition this will be advised on the **O&MDSA Website** and **Facebook** page.

APPROVAL AND REVIEW

This policy was last updated and adopted by O&MDSA on 20 October 2024.