



AFL London Weather Policy

1. Application

The AFL London Weather Policy, applies to all members of the Association and any game that has an affiliate of the Association, must comply.

1.1 Members that fall under the Association that must comply with this policy include;

- Players
- Coaches
- Officials
- Spectators
- Administrators
- Volunteers
- Sponsors

2. Policy Statement

Environmental factors regularly affect the playing of Australian Football. While environmental factors will not usually influence whether an Australian Football Match should commence or continue to be played, occasionally extremely adverse weather conditions may give rise to a need to assess whether players and/or officials are in environmental danger. This policy sets out the approach that the Football Body should adopt when assessing extreme weather conditions.

3. Extreme Heat

Heat-related stress can lead to impaired player performance (eg; dizziness, headaches, collapse and illness). In its extreme form, heat can be life threatening. Preventing heat stress and injury maintains optimum performance and improves recovery. To prevent heat stress, careful planning and preparation is required in accordance with this section 3.

3.1 Policy

- 3.1.1 Any temperature above 34 degrees Celsius should be considered Extreme Heat and play must be suspended for up to 60 minutes in which if the temperature does not drop below this temperature in this time, play is abandoned. To check the weather with the Met office you can call 0370 900 0100 at any time within the UK.
- 3.1.2 The decision of suspending or abandonment of play must be made by the umpire, or the two coaches in the absence of an umpire.
- 3.1.3 The AFL London Chairman must be informed at the earliest possible notice, with the scores, and time played given. The Chairman will decide whether if the game should be continued at alter date or if the final score stands.
- 3.1.4 If a game is abandoned at a specific time and other games from that same division are played at the same time, all games are abandoned, unless the clubs of other games can prove in their area the temperature was below 34 degree Celsius for the game to finish.
- 3.1.5 If a game is abandoned before play can even start (an hour from the official start time), the result will become a draw and both teams will share the points.

- 3.1.6 If the temperature is between 26 degrees Celsius and 33.9 degrees Celsius a Heat Policy may take into effect and the following provisions are allowed in the agreement between the two teams;
- 3.1.6.1 The two clubs may have an unlimited number of water carriers delivering water onto the field if they wear uniform that allows them to stand out.
 - 3.1.6.2 The length of the quarters may be shortened by five minutes.
 - 3.1.6.3 The length of the Quarter breaks may be extended in agreeance with the official umpire.

3.2 Preliminary Assessment

Clubs should assess the heat stress risk by reviewing information provided by the Met office (<https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/>).

3.3 Onus on Player

Players have a responsibility to ensure that the impact of environmental factors such as extreme heat is not exacerbated by their own conduct. Accordingly, the following general guidelines should be followed.

Players should:

- (i) ensure adequate fluid intake prior to game and during game (500-700mls per quarter);
- (ii) monitor hydration;
- (iii) notify medical and coaching staffs when effected by heat or when performance is noticeably effected;
- (iv) use water and electrolyte drinks;
- (v) use pre-game, game and post-game cooling strategies;
- (vi) do not play in the heat with an illness; and
- (vii) apply sun protection factor 30+ sunscreen in sunny conditions.

3.4 Club Responsibility

All Clubs competing in a competition administered by the Association should monitor environmental factors such as extreme heat both in Matches and at any Australian Football training session administered by the Club. The Club should assess the heat stress risk by reviewing information provided by the Met Office. Heat stress management strategies should also be applied at all training sessions administered by the Club.

The following general guidelines should be followed:

(a) Clubs should:

- (i) use cooling aids if available – ice vests, spray bottles, sponges, fans (in rooms and on interchange bench) and shade;

- (ii) choose heat permeable jumpers and socks;
- (iii) report incidents of heat stress illness in all players to the Football Body;
- (iv) use a Club official to be delegated the primary responsibility of monitoring and manage players for heat stress issues as they arise during a Match;
- (v) provide adequate fluids in appropriate bottles;
- (vi) ensure trainers are fit enough to access as many players as possible during the game;
- (vii) coordinate training times outside extreme conditions; and
- (viii) provide facilities for player cooling – shade, air conditioning, sprays and fans whether training or playing.

4. Lightning

4.1 BS EN/IEC 62305

The Association should comply with BS EN/IEC 62305 entitled *Lightning Protection Standard*. While the Lightning Standard will not necessarily prevent damage or personal injury due to lightning, it will reduce the probability of such damage or injury occurring.

4.2 30/30 Safety Guideline

In the absence of specific information from weather radar, a lightning location system, or a specialised warning device then the 30/30 Safety Guideline should be used.

Per the 30/30 Safety Guideline, when lightning is a possible or actual threat to an AFL London match the following procedures are applicable:

- (a) The observation of approaching storm clouds, the first flash of lightning or clap of thunder, no matter how far away should heighten lightning awareness. The level of risk depends on one's location (direction and distance) relative to the storm cell and the direction in which the storm system is traveling.
- (b) A simple method of determining the distance to the storm cell is to measure the time elapsed from when the lightning flash is observed and when the associated clap of thunder is heard.
- (c) Light travels faster than sound. If the light from the flash reaches the observer instantaneously, and knowing that sound takes approximately three (3) seconds to travel one (1) kilometre, the distance can be determined by using the following rule:

Distance (in Km) = Time from observing the flash to hearing thunder (in 3 seconds)
- (d) It is important to remember that lightning may be obscured by clouds so it must be assumed that when thunder is heard, lightning is in the vicinity. In such cases, careful judgment must be used to determine whether a threat exists
- (e) The first part of the "30/30" rule is a guide to the postponement or suspension of activities. Most experts agree that the accepted "safe" distance from lightning is greater than 10km. This means that as the time interval between observing the flash

and hearing the thunder approaches 30 seconds, all those in exposed areas should be seeking or already inside safe shelters. A storm cell with lightning activity within 10km constitutes a threat.

- (f) The second part of the 30/30 rule provides the criteria for the resumption of activity which is applicable to decisions made with BOM access as well. Here, it is recommended that people wait a minimum of 30 minutes after the last sighting of lightning or sound of thunder. This figure is based on the observation that the typical storm moves at about 40km/h. Thus, waiting 30 minutes allows the thunderstorm to be about 20km away, minimising the likelihood of a nearby lightning strike.
- (g) It is important to emphasise that blue skies and lack of rainfall are not adequate reasons to breach the 30 minute minimum return-to-activity rule.

4.3 General Lightning Safety Guideline

(a) Prior to Match Day

- (i) where weather forecasts provide important warning of possible thunderstorm activity the Football Body should monitor weather forecasts commencing Tuesday prior to scheduled Matches using the Met Office website. Note should be taken off any warnings posted;
- (ii) The Football Body should continue to monitor the Met Office site in the days leading up to the match.

(b) Match Day

- (i) Increased awareness of lightning risk should continue the Match day until the activity has finished.
- (ii) Teams and officials should proceed to the venue unless otherwise directed.
- (iii) If lightning is predicted within no less than 10km of the match venue at the scheduled starting time the game commencement time may be delayed by up to 60 minutes.
- (iv) This decision to delay or suspend play as well as resume play will be made by the Umpire based on information obtained from the Met office and discussions with the Clubs.

4.4 Club Responsibility

All Clubs competing in a competition administered by the Association should monitor environmental factors such as lightning both in Matches and at any Australian Football training session administered by the Club. The Club should assess the lightning risk by reviewing information provided by the Met office.

- (a) The following general guidelines should also be followed:

- (i) If a lightning threat emerges, the nominated Club Official must contact all relevant coaching, rehabilitation and training staff and provide updates on a regular basis.
- (ii) A decision to delay, suspend or resume training should be made in consultation with relevant coaching and administration staff.
- (iii) If players are training when the lightning threat becomes real, then they should leave the training venue immediately and take shelter inside a building or metal framed car. They should not shelter under or near trees.
- (iv) Once the storm's path has been reassessed, there must be a minimum of 30 minutes elapsed before returning to training.

When there is no access to the Met office, the "30/30" rule serves as a guide for the suspension and subsequent resumption of activities.

5. Extreme Cold

5.1 Exposure

Cold exposure can be uncomfortable, impair performance and even pose a serious threat to injury and life. Conditions created by cold exposure include frostbite and hypothermia. Wind chill can make the temperature feel much lower than they may be recorded by the Met Office.

5.2 Frostbite

Frostbite is the freezing of superficial tissues, usually of the face, ears, fingers, and toes.

5.3 Hyperthermia

Hypothermia, a significant drop in body temperature, occurs with rapid cooling, exhaustion and energy depletion. The resulting failure to the temperature-regulating mechanisms constitutes a medical emergency.

Hypothermia frequently occurs at temperatures above freezing. A wet and windy 0-10 degrees' Celsius exposure may be as serious as a sub-zero exposure.

5.4 Action

- 5.4.1 On Match day if the temperature is below 10 Degrees Celsius, the umpire and the heads of both clubs can decide if they wish to proceed with the game.
- 5.4.2 If the Temperature is below 0 degrees Celsius the game should be abandoned and rescheduled for a future date, or a draw result given. This will be decided by the chairman of the Association.
- 5.4.3 The clubs have the responsibility of providing ways and means for players to keep warm during the match if extreme cold is occurring. The clubs also have the responsibility to look after the umpires and officials in these conditions.

6. Wet Weather

6.1 Vision

- 6.1.1 An umpire or an official is unable to see more than 10 meters in front of them, or either the umpire or players struggle to see other players and the football, the umpire can suspend play until the weather clears.
- 6.1.2 Play can be suspended for a maximum of 60 minutes before the game can be abandoned and rescheduled later.

6.2 Player Safety

- 6.2.1 If wet weather makes the playing field unsafe the coaches and the umpire can discuss whether play should be rescheduled later. The following reasons are ways in which the playing field can be considered unsafe due to wet weather.
 - 6.2.1.1 If a section of the field has deep pockets of mud in which a player may get their feet stuck and cause damage.
 - 6.2.1.2 If there are puddles that are deep and considered unsafe for quick change of direction.