

BC Soccer Extreme Weather Guidelines
 February 22, 2024

Overview

Participant health and safety is a high priority for BC Soccer; thus, it is recommended to err on the side of caution if ever in doubt in any situation regarding the health and safety of participants.

The BC Soccer Extreme Weather Guidelines serve as a guidance for member organizations, affiliates, team officials, players, and match officials (registered referees) of BC Soccer. The Guidelines outlines considerations in assessing Extreme Weather conditions for the practice of soccer activities, promote awareness of potential health impacts, and provide additional information about the Extreme Heat, Extreme Cold, Preventative Measures & Potential Risk.

Extreme Heat Guidelines

1. Step 1 – Determine Location
 Go to <https://www.theweathernetwork.com/ca> and find your specific location.
2. Step 2 – Determine Temperature (Projected Temperature)
 Check the current temperature with specific focus on the “feels like” temperature which accounts for the humidity in measuring temperature
3. Step 3 – Review the EHE Activity Chart (below) for appropriate Activity Modifications.

Extreme Heat Events (EHE) Activity Chart

Humidex Value	Discomfort at rest	Risk	Recommended modifications
Below 24 C	None	Low	N/A
25C to 27C	None	Low to Moderate	N/A
28C to 31C	Some	Moderate - Athletes should be monitored	Games - Drink Breaks every 30 Minutes
32C to 36C	High	High - Athletes should be monitored closely	Games - consider reduced game length, re-schedule kick-off or cancellation
38C +	EXTREME	EXTREME	ALL ACTIVITY CANCELLED

4. Step 4 – Games, Tournament Play, Training and Practices

Where possible, matches should be scheduled for cooler times of the day.

- Playing in hot conditions both increases the risk of heat illness and impairs performance. Event organizers should attempt to organize matches at a time where less heat stress and exposure is expected. They should reschedule matches where the heat stress is extreme.

Important notes related to game play:

- the match official (registered referee) reserves the final right to cancel the game if the conditions are considered dangerous, in their opinion.

- Referee to write on game sheet reason for an abandonment with EHE Humidity Value, time & date and number calculated.
- If temperature increases dramatically during a game referees and team officials are advised to use their discretion. Record all decisions and relevant information on the game sheet.
- If possible, attempt to modify playing surfaces, natural surfaces will radiate less heat

Important notes related to training and practices:

- Team Officials should consider if the conditions are considered dangerous and if so, reschedule practice or postponing practice until a later time.
- If temperature increases dramatically during training or a practice, Team Officials are advised to use their discretion and be responsible.
- Team Officials should have an Emergency Action Plan that is shared with all participants ([see link here for template](#)).
 - o Team Officials are encouraged to complete the [NCCP Emergency Action Plan e-learning activity](#) on creating and using an Emergency Action Plan (EAP).

Laws of the Game Allowance

Law 7 within the Laws of the Game allowance for medical stoppages permitted by competition rules, e.g. 'drinks' breaks and 'cooling' breaks.

Definitions in Law:

- 'Drinks' break – Competition rules may allow 'drinks' breaks (of no more than one minute) for players to rehydrate; these are different from 'cooling' breaks
- 'Cooling' break – In the interests of player welfare and safety, competition rules may allow, in certain weather conditions (high humidity and temperatures), 'cooling' breaks (usually ninety seconds to three minutes) to allow the body's temperature to fall; these are different from 'drinks' breaks

Preventive Measures

Lightweight, breathable clothing is needed when training and playing in hot conditions.

- This type of clothing allows evaporative cooling to occur (evaporation of sweat). Heavier items of clothing can limit heat loss through this source

Ensuring players are hydrated.

- Importantly even well-hydrated players can be affected by heat illness.
- Hydration includes consuming water and fluids that contain sodium and potassium as this is lost with sweating.
- Prior to the start of training/games consume up to 2000ml of fluid
- Rule of thumb: when playing or training, drinking at least 500 ml for every 20 lbs of body weight is recommended. Thus, someone weighing 140 lbs should drink at least 3500 ml of fluid per day.

Other factors to consider in determining risk include (but are not limited to):

Not being acclimatized	Fitness Level (Unfit)
Hypo hydration	Hyper hydration
Use of a variety of medications or supplements	Persons with persistent, disabling mental illness

3 C Wind Chill or Warmer	Without Precipitation	Low risk	Proceed with activities as normal
	With precipitation	Low risk	
0 to 2 C Wind Chill	Without Precipitation	Medium risk	No more than 60 minutes outside per game or practice
	With Precipitation	High risk	No more than 40 minutes outside per game or practice
-1 to -3 C Wind Chill	Without Precipitation	High risk	No more than 30 minutes outside per game or practice
	With Precipitation	Extreme risk	All outdoor activity cancelled or moved indoors
-4 C or colder wind chill	Without Precipitation	Extreme risk	All outdoor activity cancelled or moved indoors
	With precipitation	Extreme risk	

4. Step 4 – Games, Tournament Play, Training and Practices

Where possible, halves should be shortened, or games should be cancelled or rescheduled.

- Playing in cold conditions both increases the risk of cold related illness and impairs performance. It is important that players can take more breaks to heat up and get out of the cold.

Important notes related to game play:

The Match Official reserves the final right to abandon the game if the conditions are considered dangerous, in their opinion.

- Referee to write on game sheet reason for an abandonment with Wind Chill Temperature, time & date and number calculated.
- If the temperature decreases dramatically during a game, referees and team officials are advised to use their discretion. Record all decisions and relevant information on the game sheet.

Important notes related to training/practices:

- Team Officials should consider if the conditions are considered dangerous and if so, reschedule practice or postponing practice until a later time.
- If temperature decreases dramatically during training or a practice, Team Officials are advised to use their discretion and be responsible.

- Team Officials should have an Emergency Action Plan that is shared with all participants ([see link here for template](#)).
 - o Team Officials are encouraged to complete the [NCCP Emergency Action Plan e-learning activity](#) on creating and using an Emergency Action Plan (EAP).

Preventive Measures

Dress appropriately. When temperatures drop and wind increases, the body loses heat more rapidly. Layering clothing is recommended and very effective as it can be added or removed based on body temperature and changing environmental conditions.

- Layers around the body core to insulate, as well as pants, and long sleeves or sweatshirts are recommended
- Gloves, and toques or hats are recommended to protect hands and ears
- Wicking socks that do not hold moisture inside are recommended (Cotton absorbs moisture, wool is a better alternative)

Stay Dry. Precipitation can add to the risk of illness during cold weather.

- If players do get wet during training or play, remove wet clothing and replace it with dry clothing, especially if the player will remain out of play for a prolonged period of time.

Fuel up and Stay Hydrated.

- Cold exposure requires more energy from a body, additional caloric intake may be required
- Cold weather can reduce our ability to recognize that we are becoming dehydrated. Though the thirst reflex is not activated in the cold, make a conscious effort to hydrate before, during, and after activity.

Other factors to consider in determining risk include (but are not limited to):

Not being acclimatized	Fitness Level (Unfit)
Hypo hydration	Hyper hydration
Use of a variety of medications or supplements	Persons with persistent, disabling mental illness
Certain medical conditions (cardiac, lung)	

Potential Risks of Extreme Cold Weather

Frostnip – this is a non-freezing injury of the skin, usually of the fingers, toes, ears, cheeks and chin.

- Signs & Symptoms include redness, numbness and tingling, but no tissue freezing occurs
- Treatment is done by gently rewarming the skin with clothing or skin contact. Do not rub the skin to rewarm

Chillblain – this is a more significant nonfreezing injury of the skin, similar to frostnip

- Signs & Symptoms include swelling in addition to the redness, numbness and tingling of frostnip
- Treatment is done by gently rewarming the skin with clothing or skin contact. Do not rub the skin to rewarm

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Frostbite – this is what happens when skin and tissue actually begins to freeze

- Signs & Symptoms include edema, mottled gray skin, tingling or burning, blisters and numbness or loss of sensation
- Treatment is done by gently rewarming the skin with warm water. Do not rub or massage the frostbitten area, this may increase the damage. Do not use heating pads, heat lamps, or the

heat of a stove or fireplace since skin is numb and can be easily burned.

- If any of the symptoms persist for longer than a few hours, seek medical attention.

Hypothermia – THIS IS A MEDICAL EMERGENCY- this is the result of the internal body temperature dropping to 95 F or 35 C or less. It can be fatal if not detected promptly and treated properly.

- Signs & Symptoms begin with feelings of intense cold, shivering and behaviour that is more quiet and disengaged than normal. As the condition worsens, the individual may seem confused, sleepy, and may begin slurring speech. Additional signs include shivering vigorously or suddenly not shivering, increased blood pressure, lethargy, and impaired mental function.
- Treatment- call 911 and try warming the center of the body. Ensure they are dry and cover them with layers of blankets, clothing, or towels to contain their body heat. Warm non-alcoholic beverages can also help.

Safe Sport Statement

BC Soccer believes that everyone involved in soccer has the right to participate in safe and inclusive environments free of abuse, harassment, discrimination, and to enjoy the sport at whatever level or capacity they participate in. The welfare of everyone involved in soccer is the foremost consideration and in particular, the protection of children in the sport is the responsibility of everyone involved.

About BC Soccer

Established in 1904, BC Soccer is the largest provincial sports organization (PSO) in BC and the third largest soccer-specific PSO in Canada with over 150,000 participants, consisting of registered players, coaches, referees, administrators and soccer leaders. As a professional not-for-profit society and a member of Canada Soccer, BC Soccer is committed to providing the widest opportunities for existing and potential participants, as well as provide support in the most effective and appropriate way for current players, parents, volunteers, member clubs, leagues, and districts.

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