

# Extreme Weather Policy



The safety and wellbeing of our competitors, officials and volunteers is foremost at all times. The following is provided as a guide for members, clubs and other participants, conducting and participating in cycling events and training.

First and foremost Cycling NSW encourages everyone involved in the sport to be conscious of their own personal health and safety at all times.

This policy sets out protocols to be adhered to at all levels of the sport for extreme weather conditions.

Every club/event promoter within New South Wales is encouraged to develop their own process for informing or notifying their members and other participants should an extreme weather event impact on activities. Where the event is a State Championships/Open event, CNSW will attempt to notify participants by posts on its web site & through social media and where possible by direct contact via email and/or text messaging.

At all times, should the Chief Commissaire, coach or official on duty identify any conditions which in their opinion raise the risk level beyond that reasonably expected when participating in the sport of cycling (even when those conditions do not reach the thresholds identified in this document) they should suspend/cancel competition or training.

As a rule of thumb it's better to have dissatisfaction around a cancelled event than dismay around injury or illness to a participant, official or spectator.

Where participant, official or spectator safety is considered at risk, event(s) may be cancelled or suspended. This might relate to an entire meeting programme or elements thereof (e.g. endurance races; older/younger age categories) and may include modification of events (eg reduced distances).

Conditions which might cause events to be cancelled, suspended or modified include:

- Extreme temperatures
- Fog
- Frost, hail and ice
- Flooding
- Snow
- Strong winds
- Thunder storm (lightning)
- Torrential rain

## **Cancellation and Suspension of State Championships/Open events;**

Prior to the event date, it is the Cycling NSW Competition Manager's responsibility to monitor anticipated weather conditions for referral. Should they refer the potential weather condition, the decision to cancel the event prior to its commencement shall be made by the CEO in consultation with the Race Director/promoting club and the Chief Commissaire.

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At club level events, it shall be the decision of the Club's Race Director/Race Co-ordinator or similar in consultation with the Club's chief Commissaire.

At both State and Club level events , on the day of the event the decision to cancel, suspend or modify events will be the responsibility of the Chief Commissaire in consultation with the Race Director/Promoting club and if present a CNSW Director and/or CEO.

Cycling NSW endeavours to act reasonably at all times and accepts no responsibility for actions and events beyond its control and for the consequences of actions taken in good faith, for the overall health and safety of participants, administrators, officials, spectators, at all Cycling NSW related events.

Guidelines for specific extreme weather events follow.

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## GUIDELINES FOR SPECIFIC WEATHER EVENTS - LIGHTNING

### Introduction

In Australia, lightning accounts for five to ten deaths and well over one hundred injuries annually. A large percentage of lightning strike victims survive but many of these suffer from severe lifelong injury and disability. Statistics show that approximately 25% of people killed by lightning are playing sport.

When thunderstorms threaten, officials and coaches must not let the desire to start or complete a carnival or a coaching session hinder their judgment when the safety of athletes, officials or spectators is in jeopardy.

### Lightning Facts:

- All thunderstorms produce lightning and are dangerous.
- Lightning often strikes outside the area of heavy rain and may strike as far as fifteen kilometers from any rainfall.
- 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 when overhead it is sunny, not raining, or when clear sky is visible.
- Many lightning casualties occur before the thunderstorm rains have moved into the area. This is often due to people not seeking shelter soon enough.
- Large numbers of casualties occur after the rain dissipates. This can be due to people being in too much of a hurry to go back outside and resume activities.

## EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. Chain of Command

Identify who has the authority to call for the suspension and subsequent resumption of activities.

### 2. Weather watcher

Appoint a weather watcher to monitor the weather forecasts in the days leading up to the event, and who also on the day looks for signs of developing local thunderstorms such as high winds, darkening clouds and any lightning or thunder. Particularly in the case of road events, where there is a high likelihood of lightning occurring during the event, ensure it is suspended well in advance of the first lightning strike so as participants have adequate time to seek suitable shelter options.

### 3. Providing Warnings

Activity organisers should promote lightning safety to athletes, officials and spectators. A protocol needs to be in place to warn all individuals at risk from a lightning strike. Consider placing lightning safety tips and/or emergency procedures in programs, flyers, handbooks and placing lightning safety warning signs around the venue. Consider reading lightning safety messages over the PA system if thunderstorms are forecast or are imminent.

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The information should contain:

- Criteria for the suspension and resumption of activities
- The location of safe shelters and the best way to access them.

#### 4. Safe structures and locations

Define and list safe structures and locations to evacuate to in the event of lightning. No place is absolutely safe from a lightning threat however some places are safer than others.

Safe structures:

- The primary choice for a safe structure is a large, fully enclosed building.
- If a building is not available, a fully enclosed vehicle with a metal roof and the windows completely closed is a reasonable alternative.

Unsafe locations and situations:

- An open field
- Close vicinity to the tallest structure in the area (e.g. tree/s, light pole, discus cage)
- Small structures such as rain/picnic shelters, tents, equipment sheds
- Use of indoor phones
- Use of electrical appliances
- Umbrellas or any object that increases a person's height

For road events, if lightning is present the commissaire managing each bunch shall suspend competition (where possible under the direction of the Chief commissaire subject to available communications channels). Riders should seek shelter in all available convoy cars.

#### 5. Criteria for suspension and resumption of activities

The sound of thunder should serve as an immediate warning of lightning danger. Generally speaking, if an individual can see lightning and/or hear thunder he/she is already at risk.

A procedure for announcing the suspension and resumption of activities should be in place.

##### *The 30 – 30 rule*

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 minute clock should be re-started.

The National Lightning Safety Institute in the US recommends the saying: "If you can see it, flee it; if you can hear it, clear it".

Follow your set criteria for the suspension and resumption of activities without exception.

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## 6. First Aid

Lightning victims do not carry an electrical charge, are safe to handle, and need immediate medical attention. Cardiac arrest is the immediate cause of death in lightning fatalities. Some deaths can be prevented if the victim receives the proper first aid:

- Call 000 at once.
- Check the victim's pulse and breathing. Begin CPR if necessary.
- If possible, move the victim to a safer place. Be aware that the thunderstorm may still be dangerous. Don't let the rescuers become victims.

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## GUIDELINES FOR SPECIFIC WEATHER EVENTS – EXTREME HEAT

Heat stress is a serious health risk. High intensity exercise in a hot environment, with the associated fluid loss and elevation of body temperature, can lead to dehydration, heat exhaustion and heat stroke (which can be fatal). Children are at greater risk than adults are because their thermoregulation mechanisms are not fully developed. Older members can also be at high risk because of reduced cardiac function.

Competition organisers have a Duty of Care to monitor environmental conditions and to take action to minimise the risk of heat stress to participants.

### 1. Scope of these Requirements

These recommendations shall apply to all competitions conducted under and sanctioned by Cycling NSW.

### 2. Hot Weather Requirements

The following minimum requirements will determine activation of the Extreme Heat Recommendations.

Temperatures are to be deemed at the race venue by the side of the course NOT in direct sunlight. The Chief Commissaire is required to conduct assessments every 30 minutes throughout the day when temperatures are above 30 degrees Celsius.

#### Temperatures 30.9 degrees Celsius or less

For competitions where the forecast minimum temperature is 30 degrees or below, participants should exercise caution, particularly in endurance events or those that require the participants to remain in direct sunlight for an extended period of time;

- Participants should drink often to remain hydrated;
- No competition modifications, for track cycling, are recommended however distance events should be held in the coolest part of the day.

#### Temperatures between 31 and 37.9 Celsius degrees (inclusive)

Participants should exercise caution particularly in road races and track endurance events  
Events should be scheduled for the coolest part of the day;

- Athletes should carefully consider the number of events they compete in over the course of the competition;
- The promoter will provide access to water for riders (for purchase), officials and volunteers (free of charge);
- Modification to the program may be considered by the Chief Commissaire
- Shelter must be provided for officials who are not shaded.

#### Temperatures between 38 and 40.9 degrees Celsius (inclusive)

Participants should exercise extreme caution

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- Competition schedule and program may be modified with respect to time of day and the duration of the event.
- Endurance events may be cancelled or postponed until later in the day or after sunset
- All Officials to take a 10 minute break each hour.
- Promoter to provide access to water for participants, officials and volunteers.
- Shelter must be provided for officials who are not shaded.

## **Temperature 41 degrees and above**

All competition will be postponed until the temperature is below 41 degrees Celsius.

## **Discretionary Cancellation**

Cycling NSW reserves the right to cancel any competition at its absolute discretion if it is deemed that the prevailing or predicted environmental conditions, such as (but not limited to) extreme heat / humidity present a serious health risk to athletes or officials.

## **3. Requirements of Chief Commissaire**

The Chief Commissaire must have on site, the appropriate instrument to measure Absolute Temperature. Once the Heat Guidelines are applied the Chief Commissaire must review the situation every 30 minutes when the temperature is over 31 degrees. The Chief Commissaire must ensure:

- Cold drinking water must be made available;
- Ice is available for heat stress emergencies;
- They have access to a person with a current Senior First Aid Certificate;
- They have ready access to medical assistance;
- They have information about the nearest medical assistance should be on display in a prominent location.

## **4. Important Information**

Under the UCI Regulations the Chief Commissaire has the power to suspend racing or postpone any race on account of the weather conditions. The Chief Commissaire may invoke the Hot Weather Guidelines if he/she believes there is real danger to the competitors' health.

The measurement values used in the Hot Weather Guidelines to determine the level of risk are for an average person involved in continuous strenuous activity in high temperatures. Individual persons will be affected differently by the environmental conditions depending on their:

- Fitness level
- Athletic ability
- Age
- Gender
- Any predisposed medical conditions
- Level of acclimatisation

## **5. Instruments for measuring Absolute Temperature**

Temperature should be taken using an electronic thermometer