

# **South Australian Amateur Walkers Club Inc.**

## Weather Policy

26<sup>TH</sup> March 2012



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## **1.0 Introduction**

SAAWC has a responsibility to take a positive role in educating and increasing the awareness of its members in regards to the dangers of physical activity in the heat. SAAWC acknowledges it has a responsibility and duty of care to ensure the safety of participants, particularly in competitions conducted by SAAWC. With this in mind, the SAAWC Weather Policy for competitions has been developed with reference to the guidelines produced by Sports Medicine Australia (SMA).

## **2.0 Acronyms**

**SAAWC** – South Australian Amateur Walks Club Inc.

**ASA** – Athletics SA.

**LA** – Little Athletics.

## **3.0 Relevant Web Sites**

**SAAWC** - <http://www.sarwc.org/>

**Athletics SA** - <http://www.athleticssa.com.au>

**Sports Medicine Australia** - [www.smasa.asn.au](http://www.smasa.asn.au)

**Sun Smart** - <http://www.cancersa.org.au/asp/sunsmart.aspx>

## 4.0 Rationale

Exercise in the heat places extra demands on the body, particularly when participants are exposed to excessive heat for an extended period of time. The dangers of high intensity exercise in a hot environment, accompanied with associated fluid loss and elevation of body temperature can be harmful and even fatal. Dehydration, heat exhaustion and heat stroke may result if proper precautions are not taken.

In deciding whether to modify, cancel or postpone events or training due to the heat, there are many factors that need to be taken into consideration. The following recommended guidelines have been produced by SAAWC to assist our club and members in deciding whether to modify, cancel or postpone events or training.

## 5.0 Temperature Determination

**The forecast maximum temperature referred to in this Policy is that issued by the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) at 4:00pm CDT one day prior to competition (i.e. 4pm Friday for Saturday competition).**

Members are encouraged to refer to the Bureau's website which can be found at [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au) and click the Adelaide link. SAAWC will also post a notice on its website if the following day's competition will be modified or, in extreme cases, cancelled.

## 6.0 Ambient Temperature

The following table, produced by Sports Medicine Australia, shows a number of ambient temperature ranges and the associated risk of heat illness. This table should be used as a guide in determining volume, duration, and intensity of training and competition.

Ambient Temperature	Relative Humidity	Risk of Heat Illness	Recommended management for sports activities
15-20		Low	Heat illness can occur in distance running. Caution over-motivation
21-25	Exceeds 70%	Low to Moderate	Increased vigilance. Caution over-motivation
26-30	Exceeds 60%	Moderate	Moderate early pre-season training. Reduce intensity and duration of play/training. Take more breaks
31-35	Exceeds 50%	High to Very High	Uncomfortable for most people. Limit intensity, take more breaks. Limit duration to less than 60 minutes per session.
36 and above	Exceeds 30%	Extreme	Very stressful for most people. Postpone to cooler conditions or cancellation

Source: [www.sma.org.au](http://www.sma.org.au)

## **7.0 Guidelines and Actions for Competition**

### **7.1 Wet weather and storms**

In extreme wet conditions the walking surface shall be reviewed to determine if it is safe to minimise the risk of athletes slipping.

During storms the locality of lightning shall be considered. If lightning storms are determined to be within the direct competition area competition will be cancelled.

### **7.2 Windy Conditions**

Windy conditions introduce a risk of falling or flying debris. On windy days the conditions shall be evaluated by the committee and if determined to be unsafe events will be cancelled.

### **7.3 Temperatures 30 degrees or less**

For competitions where the forecast maximum 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 and implement sun smart procedures (e.g. long sleeve shirt, hat, sunglasses, sunscreen).

No competition modifications are recommended, however distance events are best held in the coolest part of the competition period.

The hours between 11am and 3pm in summer are generally said to be the hottest period of the day.

### **7.4 Temperatures between 31 and 37 degrees (inclusive)**

For competitions where the forecast maximum temperature is between 31 and 37 degrees (inclusive), participants should exercise caution, particularly in endurance events such as long distance running.

Distance events should be scheduled in the coolest part of the competition program.

Athletes should carefully consider the number of events they compete in over the course of the competition, particularly when temperatures reach the higher end of this range.

SAAWC will provide shade at event sites for athletes and officials where possible.

Participants should drink often to remain hydrated and implement sun smart procedures (e.g. long sleeve shirt, hat, sunglasses, sunscreen).

Modifications to the competition program should be considered.

SAAWC competitions will be cancelled when the temperature reaches 36 degrees or above for Under 18.

### **7.5 Temperatures between 38 and 40 degrees (inclusive)**

For competition where the forecast maximum temperature is between 38 and 40 degrees (inclusive), participants should exercise extreme caution.

Distance events exceeding 1500m in length will be cancelled or postponed until after sunset (if applicable).

Athletes and Officials, should consider reducing the number of events in which they participate.

Participants should drink often to remain hydrated and implement sun smart procedures (e.g. long sleeve shirt, hat, sunglasses, sunscreen).

### **7.6 Temperatures 41 degrees and above**

SAAWC competitions will be cancelled when the temperature reaches 41 degrees or above for Adults.

## **8.0 Discretionary Cancellation**

SAAWC reserves the right to cancel any competition at its absolute discretion if it is deemed that the environmental conditions, such as extreme humidity, wet surfaces or lightning present a serious health risk to athletes and officials, even if temperatures fall within the acceptable levels detailed within this policy document.

