

# WEATHER SAFETY POLICY

## 1. Purpose

International Tag Federation is committed to providing a safe environment for all participants, officials, volunteers and spectators. This policy provides guidance on managing risks associated:

- heavy rain
- wet playing surfaces
- electrical storms
- hail
- extreme heat conditions, and
- air pollution

during Tag activities.

**The safety of people always takes priority over the continuation of play.**

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to all International Tag Federation matches, competitions, training sessions, tournaments and sanctioned events.

## 3. Responsibility and Authority

The Competition Manager, Event Controller or appointed official has the authority to suspend, delay or cancel matches or training due to unsafe weather or field conditions.

**Referees may stop play immediately if conditions become dangerous.**

The Competition Manager, Event Controller or appointed official are the only persons who have the authority to resume play after a weather related stoppage

All participants must follow directions from officials without delay.

## 4. General Weather Risk Management

Competition management must:

- Monitor weather forecasts before and during events
- Inspect fields and surrounding areas for hazards
- Consider risks such as slippery surfaces, standing water, reduced traction, poor visibility and damage to the playing surface
- Maintain communication with venue management where applicable

**Play must be suspended if conditions create an unacceptable risk of injury.**

## 5. Heavy Rain and Wet Fields

During periods of heavy rain:

- Fields should be inspected for surface damage, pooling water and unsafe footing
- Play may be postponed, modified or cancelled before or during an event
- Training should be cancelled if it risks injury or long-term damage to fields

If a field becomes unsafe during a match, the referee or Competition Manager must suspend or abandon play.

## 6. Lightning and Thunder

Lightning presents a serious risk of injury or death.

International Tag Federation adopts the 30/30 Lightning Rule:

### Suspend Play

- If the time between lightning and thunder is 30 seconds or less, lightning is within 10 km and play must stop immediately

### Do Not Resume Play

- Play must not resume until at least 30 minutes after the last thunder

Participants and spectators must seek safe shelter immediately.

**Safe Shelter** includes:

- Substantial buildings with wiring and plumbing
- Fully enclosed vehicles with windows closed

**Unsafe Shelter** includes:

- Open fields
- Metal structures and goal posts
- Trees
- Tents, shelters and dugouts

## 7. Hail

All hailstorms require immediate suspension of play.

Participants must move to safe **shelter**. Play may only resume when:

- Hail has stopped
- The surface is free of ice or unsafe debris
- Officials determine the field is safe

Delays may be required to allow melting or clearing of ice.

## 8. Extreme Heat Conditions

### Assessing Heat Risk

Heat stress risk should be assessed using air temperature and relative humidity.

For Australian based events, the ITF refers to the Sports Medicine Australia Extreme Heat Policy 2025 v1 and uses its Sports Heat tool to assist in determining responses to extreme heat conditions

Organisers should:

1. Refer to <https://sma-heat-policy.sydney.edu.au/>
2. Use the values to determine the heat risk level below

### Heat Risk Levels and Required Actions

#### *Low Risk*

- Encourage regular hydration before, during and after play
- Provide access to drinking water
- Wear lightweight, breathable clothing
- Provide shaded rest areas

#### *Moderate Risk*

- Schedule extra drink breaks
- Minimum 15 minutes rest per 45 minutes of activity (training)
- Extend half-time breaks to at least 10 minutes
- Ensure all players and officials have access to shade and water

#### *High Risk*

- Implement quarter breaks in matches (3–5 minutes mid-half)
- Increase frequency and duration of rest breaks
- Apply active cooling strategies such as cold towels, misting water, cold water immersion for hands/arms, and fans or shaded cooling areas
- Monitor participants closely for signs of heat illness

#### *Extreme Risk*

- Postpone, suspend or cancel activities
- If play has started, stop immediately
- Move all participants and spectators to shaded or air-conditioned areas
- Begin active cooling immediately

### Hydration and Sun Safety

All events conducted in hot weather must:

- Provide accessible drinking water
- Encourage players to drink regularly
- Provide shaded areas for rest
- Promote use of sunscreen, hats and protective clothing

### Recognising Heat Illness

#### *Signs of Heat Exhaustion*

- Dizziness, headache, weakness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Fainting
- Rapid pulse

### *Response:*

- Move to shade
- Cool with water, ice towels or fans
- Provide fluids
- Monitor condition

### *Signs of Heat Stroke (Medical Emergency)*

- Confusion, agitation, irrational behaviour
- Collapse or unconsciousness
- Seizures
- Very high body temperature

### *Response:*

- Call 000 immediately
- Begin aggressive cooling with ice and water
- Continue cooling until medical help arrives

## High-Risk Individuals

Extra care should be taken with individuals who:

- Are unwell or recently had a fever
- Have heart or kidney conditions
- Are not acclimatised to heat
- Have high body fat
- Take medications affecting hydration or sweating

## 9. Air Quality

Poor air quality can pose a health risk to athletes. Athletes involved in high performance sport can be at a higher risk while performing high intensity prolonged exercise outdoors and additional caution should be taken. The Air Quality Index (AQI) is an accepted means of quantifying air quality by public health authorities covering:

- Air pollution levels at the nearest monitoring site or region
- The common contributing pollutants
- The overall health risk associated with a given rating

Above all else, a participant's health should take priority and the decision to play will be left to the individual, participants who are asthmatic should ensure they have all medications with them prior to taking the field. The following table has been adapted from the NSW Public Health Unit and AIS Position Statement on Smoke Pollution and Exercise:

Air Quality Index Reading	AIS Recommended Action	Oztag Modifications
<b>VERY GOOD (0–33)</b>	Enjoy activities	Play games as per normal
<b>GOOD (34 – 66)</b>	Enjoy activities	Play games as per normal
<b>FAIR (67 – 99)</b>	<b>Asthmatic Athletes:</b> Should have a medical review prior to performing high intensity extended training outdoors	Play as per normal  Issue recommendations to participants that sensitive groups such as asthmatics should have their inhalers and/or medication on hand during competition.
<b>VERY POOR (100 – 149)</b>	<b>Air Pollution Health Alert</b> Asthmatics or symptomatic non-asthmatics should not compete or train outdoors. Minimise asymptomatic athlete exposure.	Play as per normal  Issue warnings to all participants that they should review their participation in games relative to their personal health and have their inhalers and/or medication on hand during competition.  <b>Competition administrators are recommended to have access to appropriate medical personnel on site.</b>
<b>HAZARDOUS (150 – 200)</b>	<b>Air Pollution Health Alert</b> Outdoor training should be rescheduled indoors, and exposure should be minimised for everyone.	In addition to the above, competition administrators are recommended to review the local conditions at the grounds in conjunction with the AQI readings and may make amendments to playing conditions. Decisions to amend conditions are at the discretion of the competition administrators and should be made in conjunction with a view of ensuring the well-being of all participants. Adaptations to playing conditions may include, but are not limited to, inclusion of a drinks break for each half, amendment to quarters and/or a reduction of match duration.
<b>HAZARDOUS (201+)</b>		In addition to the above, competition management are required to review the

		<p>local conditions at the grounds in conjunction with the AQI readings and shall implement amendments to playing conditions by including drink breaks in each half as a minimum standard. Further adaptations to playing conditions may be implemented depending on the local conditions at the grounds including but not limited to, amendment to quarters and/or a reduction of match duration and, in extreme cases, postponement or cancellation of fixtures.</p>
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The following links will be useful in helping you determine your region’s air quality:

- [Australian Capital Territory](#)
- [Victoria](#)
- [New South Wales](#)
- [Queensland](#)
- [Western Australia](#)

Air quality should be assessed using the **Air Quality Index (AQI)** from relevant state or territory environment monitoring authorities.

Organisers should:

- Check AQI readings before play and periodically during events
- Consider visible smoke, smell, and participant symptoms
- Consider combined environmental stressors (e.g. heat + smoke)

## Symptoms of Air Pollution Exposure

Participants should be removed from play and medically assessed if they experience:

- Persistent coughing or wheezing
- Shortness of breath
- Chest tightness
- Dizziness or fatigue

If severe breathing difficulty occurs, call 000 immediately.

## Participant Responsibility

Participants should:

- Carry required asthma medication
- Report symptoms immediately
- Follow directions from officials

## 10. Communication of Decisions

Competition administrators should communicate weather-related decisions through:

- Ground announcements
- Team officials
- Social media or event communication channels (where available)

Clear and early communication reduces confusion and risk.

## 11. Participant Responsibility

All participants share responsibility for safety and must:

- Report unsafe conditions to officials
- Follow directions immediately
- Avoid unnecessary risk during adverse weather

## 12. Disclaimer

The information in these guidelines is general in nature only. Reading or using these guidelines is not the same as getting medical advice from your doctor or health professional. All reasonable attempts have been made to ensure the information is up to date and accurate. However, the ITF is not responsible for any loss, injury, claim or damage that may result from using or applying the information in these guidelines

## 13. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure alignment with best practice in sports safety and risk management.