



HEAT AND HYDRATION POLICY

Overview

This policy aims to provide Ridgewood Athletics Centre with a set of guidelines to provide a safe environment regarding to weather events, and to reduce the likelihood of illness or injuries occurring because of inclement weather.

Ridgewood Athletics Centre takes the welfare of our athletes very seriously and has established the following guidelines in relation to Heat and Hydration and safety of our athletes.

Purpose

Although all care is taken by the Committee, Officials and Helpers, it is always the responsibility of the Athlete, or their Parent/Guardians in the case of younger children, to decide when participation in an event or competition is safe for that athlete. This policy exists to protect athletes, officials, and other participants from exposure to the elements or physical stress. The Ridgewood Athletics Centre may decide to modify the schedule of relevant disciplines to protect athletes, officials, and other participants.

Policy Aims

- To ensure the Ridgewood Athletics Centre venue is a safe place to compete, spectate and officiate in inclement weather conditions.
- To protect the health, safety, and wellbeing of all who participate in the activities and events at Ridgewood Athletics Centre.
- Provide guidance to Events and Competition organisers regarding the effectiveness management of extreme weather conditions.

Policy Statement

The Ridgewood Athletics Centre Committee will closely monitor weather forecasts and conditions and seek to comply with the following guidelines when managing extreme conditions.

General

Ridgewood Athletics Centre Committee should be aware of weather forecasts and plan accordingly to minimise the risk of inclement weather affecting athletes, officials, and spectators.

All officials and participants should be made aware of the chain of command for event management and control. It should be clear who has authority to make decisions relevant to this heat policy and who is responsible for the communication regarding these decisions.

The postponement, cancellation, or continuation of Ridgewood Athletics Centre competitions will be at the discretion of the Arena Manager.

It is recommended that if a large increase in temperature is likely to occur, parents and officials should take extra care to ensure athletes are sufficiently hydrated and shade provided. It is recommended that extra care be taken of athletes who are greater at risk, that are exercising in high temperatures.

Education

All parents should educate their children on the importance of sun safety and how to be sun smart. A copy of this policy should be provided to each athlete and parent by the Clubs.





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Attire

All athletes should be wearing sun safe attire during competition days whilst exposed to the sun. Hats are recommended to be worn at all times, especially during days of excessive heat.

Note: Athletes who wear hats during jumping event attempts are reminded that the hat will be deemed as part of the body and will be judged accordingly.

All Committee members, Officials, Volunteers and Parents should be setting a sun smart example and should be wearing appropriate clothing, hats, and sunglasses.

Sunscreen

Sunscreen should be used by all Athletes. Sunscreen should be provided by all clubs and located under the club tents, and by the Centre and located in a central position around the competition area. Sunscreen must be of high quality and meet Australian standards.

Shade

Shade tents should be provided, where possible at all Field (events)[1], Marshalling, Start/Finish areas as well as other areas where athletes or officials will be waiting for long periods of time unprotected from the sun. Each Club should provide adequate shade for Athletes when not competing at events.

Public Announcements

The event announcer should make regular public announcements to remind those at the event to keep drinking water, apply sunscreen and remain in the shade where possible.

Fluids

It is recommended that each athlete, official and helper take enough water with them when competing or officiating at an event. Water stations should be provided by all clubs and located under the club tent. Water should be cooler than ambient temperature. Water, sports drinks, and fruit juices should be made available at the centre canteen. Where possible, additional water should be made available to allow participants to douse themselves and thereby assisting the cooling process (e.g.) spray bottles, hoses, buckets etc.

Postponement/Cancellation

It is recommended extreme caution is used where ambient temperatures exceed 37c for an extended period (more than 30 minutes). The centre has a digital thermometer to measure the ambient temperature which is located unimpeded under the announcer's tent. Once the ambient temperature reaches 37c the time must be documented. If the ambient temperature remains above 37c for more than 30 minutes then all events for the remainder of the competition day will be cancelled and if possible rescheduled for a later date. The Competition Managers will make the final decision regarding postponement or cancellation of any events. The Competition Managers may also cancel or postpone any event if in their opinion poses a risk to the health or safety of athletes regardless of the temperature.

If any events are cancelled, athletes are required to physically marshal for the cancelled event(s) and have their name marked off, for eligibility for an event count and any participation point relevant to the event. If cancelled events are rescheduled for a later date, only marshalled athletes will be eligible to compete in the rescheduled event.





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Heat Stress

If an athlete exhibits signs of heat stress or heat exhaustion they should stop, drink more fluids, and cool down. Remove the athletes from the field, lay them down in a cool place and give plenty of cool water. If an athlete is confused or unable to drink water – seek medical help immediately.

Heat Stroke

Severe dehydration may lead to heat stroke, which is potentially fatal and must be treated immediately by a medical practitioner. Athletes who keep participating when suffering from heat exhaustion may experience heat stroke. Heat stroke can still occur even if the athlete has been drinking plenty of fluid. It is important to cool the athlete as quickly as possible.

Steps to support Athletes who are experiencing heat distress.

- Call a doctor or Ambulance immediately.
- Remove from the field and lay the athlete down in a cool place.
- Give cool water to drink if conscious.
- Cool the athlete by putting in a cool bath, shower, or under hose, applying wrapping ice packs to the groin and armpits or use wet towels.
- Maximise airflow over the athlete using a fan or fan them with towels.

