



# Extreme Weather Policy

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Version 7.1

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## 1. Policy Overview

### 1.1 Introduction

Football West is the sole governing body for football in Western Australia, overseeing all levels of competition, coaching and player development across both metropolitan and regional areas. Football is a unifying force in the WA community, connecting participants and fans of all ages, genders, and backgrounds.

Affiliated with FA and FIFA, Football West supports and promotes the game across parks, pitches, and indoor centres throughout the state. Through structured development pathways, Football West fosters the next generation of players, while also providing opportunities for coaches and match officials to grow and achieve their aspirations in the sport.

### 1.2 Context

Football West recognises the dangers of extreme weather and the need to ensure that there are appropriate policies and procedures in place to mitigate risks to players, officials, coaches, volunteers, and spectators. The extreme weather policy is to:

- Protect the health, safety and well-being of persons who participate in football activities in Western Australia.
- Ensure venues are safe places to play, officiate and spectate so far as is reasonably practicable.
- Provide a defined process to any football activity or competition organiser on managing extreme weather conditions.

### 1.3 Purpose

Football West is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all participants of our sport. We strive to make football a positive experience.

### 1.4 Audience

This Policy applies to Clubs, Match Officials, and staff.

### 1.5 Responsibilities

The following responsibilities have been assigned:

Role	Function
CEO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approve this Policy and any amendments.</li> </ul>
General Manager - Football	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement this Policy.</li> <li>• Ensure all Match Officials adhere to this Policy.</li> <li>• Annually review this Policy and recommend changes to the CEO.</li> </ul>
Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt and promote this Policy and incorporate its key elements in plans and budgets.</li> </ul>
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adhere to this Policy in performing their specific functions.</li> </ul>
Clubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adhere to this Policy.</li> <li>• Proactively identify any risks to health in extreme weather conditions and act accordingly.</li> </ul>
Match Officials and participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adhere to this Policy.</li> </ul>

## 1.6 Authority

This Policy derives its authority from the CEO. The Policy is effective from the date of CEO approval.

## 1.7 Review

This Policy will be reviewed and updated annually or earlier as required.

# 2. Policy Statement

## 2.1 Extreme Heat

The risk of an elevated body temperature from high intensity sport in a hot environment is significant and can lead to heat illness presented as heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Symptoms can be worse if fluid replacement during exercise is inadequate which leads to fluid loss and dehydration.

Sports Medicine Australia characterises heat exhaustion by a high heart rate, dizziness, headache, loss of endurance and skill, nausea, clammy and pale skin, and collapse.

Heat stroke is similar to heat exhaustion but with a dry skin, confusion, collapse, and possible coma. It may arise in a player who is suffering from heat exhaustion and has persisted in exercise. This is a potentially fatal condition and must be treated immediately.

Factors which impair the body's ability to dissipate heat, and significantly increase the risk of heat illness occurring include:

- High ambient temperature.
- Solar radiation.
- Humidity (which compromises the efficacy of sweating).
- Dehydration.

### 2.1.1 Requirements during Hot Weather:

During the hotter months, Football West will monitor the temperature forecast in the days prior to all scheduled Matches.

Football West will determine whether the **Hot Weather** provisions within the **Extreme Weather Policy** are to be activated, based on temperature readings published by the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM).

<http://www.bom.gov.au/wa/forecasts/map7day.shtml>

Football West will determine the status of all sanctioned Football West matches and notify all relevant stakeholders by 10.00am Friday for all Saturday and Sunday matches and/or at least 24 hours before the start of a match on any other day.

Depending on the location of the competition venue, Football West will utilise the weather forecast in the area closest to the venue and regional areas when making decisions.

### 2.1.2 Competitions Conducted in Hot Weather

The table below will be implemented to determine the cause of action that Football West will take regarding Hot Weather during competition matches:

Ambient Temperature	Juniors (up to 12 yrs.)	Juniors (13 – 17 yrs.)	Senior Men & Women	Full-Time Pathway Program Teams
Up to 31°C	Games to be played			
32°C - 35°C	Games to be cancelled	Games to be rescheduled	Games to be played	
36°C - 38°C			Games to be rescheduled & withdraw approval of a friendly match	

<b>39°C +</b>		<b>Games to be rescheduled</b>
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Communication to clubs, team officials and match officials from Football West will occur through the competition management system

#### 2.1.3 Drinks Breaks during Hot Weather Matches

- If the temperature at kick off is forecast to be 30 degrees Celsius or higher for junior Matches, 34 degrees Celsius or higher for senior Matches, a drinks break must be held in each half of the match.
- The timing of the drinks break is at the discretion of the Match Official but should occur, where possible, approximately two-thirds through each half. This is due to the players being able to hydrate more appropriately prior to the commencement of the half, with the drinks break providing a “top-up” opportunity before half time or the end of the Match.
- In extreme circumstances, the Match Official, in consultation with the team officials, may permit two drinks breaks per half in Matches. If this is implemented, the drinks breaks are to be held, where possible, every 15 minutes.

#### 2.1.4 Training Sessions Conducted in Hot Weather

Clubs should check the temperature forecast 2-3 days prior to each training session during the hotter months, as published by BOM at <http://www.bom.gov.au/wa/forecasts/map7day.shtml>

The table below is to be used by clubs and associations to determine whether outdoor training is to continue or be cancelled. Indoor training in an air-conditioned venue may continue.

Ambient Temperature	Juniors (up to 12 yrs.)	Juniors (13 – 17 yrs.)	Senior Men & Women	Full-Time Pathway Program Teams
Up to 31°C	Training to continue			
32°C - 35°C	Training to be rescheduled to a time where the session can be completed by 11am or commence after 5pm		Training to continue	
36°C - 38°C	Training to be cancelled & rescheduled		Training to be rescheduled to a time where the session can be completed by 11am or commence after 5pm	
39°C and above	All Outdoor training to be Cancelled			

The temperatures outlined (above) in 2.3 and 2.5 are the maximum cancellation temperatures. The club may deem that cancellation of training is necessary at lower temperatures due to the localised conditions, including humidity. The club can check the humidity prior to commencing the training.

#### 2.1.5 Minimising Risks

- Clubs should encourage all participants to drink fluids prior to, during and after all Matches and training sessions to avoid dehydration and for rehydration following strenuous activity.
- During Matches and training sessions, Clubs should ensure that there is an adequate supply of water for drinking and refreshment.
- Clubs should make every effort to provide adequate resources for participants including the provision of water, ice, fans, cooling vests and should monitor the players to ensure that they are fit enough to participate or continue to participate.
- Clubs should, where possible, provide a shaded area for participants during breaks in Matches and training sessions.

- Clubs must ensure all participants are protected from harmful UV exposure by requiring the use of sunscreen, providing access to shade, encouraging protective clothing, and scheduling outdoor activities outside peak UV periods whenever practicable.

### 2.1.6 First Aid

- To avoid heat exhaustion, if participants feel unwell during exercise, they should immediately cease activity and rest. Further benefit comes if the rest is in a shaded area with some passing breeze (from a fan if necessary) and the person takes extra hydration. Misting or spraying with water can also help.
- Heat stroke is a potentially fatal condition and must be treated immediately. It should be assumed that any collapsed participant is at danger of heat stroke. The best first aid measures are “strip/soak/fan”:
  - Strip off any excess clothing.
  - Soak with water.
  - Fan.
  - Ice placed in groin and armpits is also helpful.
- The aim is to reduce body temperature as quickly as possible. The participant should immediately be referred for treatment by a medical professional. It is important to note that heat exhaustion or heat stroke can still occur even in the presence of good hydration.

## 2.2 Rain and Hail

Rainstorms, flooding, and hail have the potential to create dangerous conditions for players, match officials, coaches, and spectators. The relevant match officials and administrators must ensure the health, safety and well-being of players, match officials, coaches, and spectators as the overriding priority

Where rain, flood and hail create unacceptable risk, the relevant official or administrators may suspend play until the conditions and playing surface are fit for play or cancel the fixture if it is unlikely to be safe, if time permits.

The postponement and delay of fixtures process is outlined in the Football West Competition Rules.

## 2.3 Unsuitable / Unsafe Pitches (Flooded Pitches)

The following procedures apply when pitches are deemed unsafe or unplayable due to flooding or waterlogged conditions.

### 2.3.1 MiniRoos & Cluster Games

- Clubs may postpone and/or cancel these games at their own discretion if the pitch is deemed unplayable.

### 2.3.2 Junior Games

- For 8:00am–9:30am kick-offs: games must be called off by the appointed referee.
- If no referee is appointed: Clubs are required to submit photographic evidence through the field closure functionality on Squadi or emailing: [clubsupport@footballwest.com.au](mailto:clubsupport@footballwest.com.au)
- Games after 9:30am: Clubs may request a postponement by providing photographic evidence to Club Support.
- Football West will review the submitted evidence and make the final decision on whether games should be postponed

### 2.3.3 Senior Games – Community Competitions

- For the first senior community game of the day, the appointed match official will determine if the pitch is playable.

- If no match official is appointed, Clubs must send photographic evidence or updated evidence of pitch conditions through the field closure functionality on Squadi or emailing: [clubsupport@footballwest.com.au](mailto:clubsupport@footballwest.com.au)
- Football West will review the submitted evidence and make the final decision on whether games should be postponed.

#### 2.3.4 Senior Games – NPL + SL + AMS + WL Div 1

- The appointed match official for each game will determine if the pitch is playable.
- If no match official is appointed, Clubs must send photographic evidence or updated evidence of pitch conditions through the field closure functionality on Squadi or emailing: [clubsupport@footballwest.com.au](mailto:clubsupport@footballwest.com.au)
- Football West will review the submitted evidence and make the final decision on whether games should be postponed.

#### 2.4 Photographic Evidence Requirements

- Multiple images must be provided showing the full field and half field for each affected pitch.
- Examples include water pooling, unsafe muddy areas, or any clear hazards impacting player safety.
- Football West will review the submitted evidence and make the final decision on whether games should be postponed.

**Please note: all decisions made by Football West are final.**

#### 2.5 Council Ground Closures

- If a Club's local council has closed pitches for the weekend, please notify Club Support as soon as possible.
- Include a copy of the official council notification (if available).
- This allows Football West to make timely decisions and communicate postponements accordingly.

#### 2.6 Social Media Reminder

Clubs **must not post** on social media about junior or senior match postponements until approval has been received from Football West.

#### 2.7 Thunderstorms and Lightning

The definition of a thunderstorm is where lightning can be seen and/or thunder can be heard. Any storm which produces thunder means lightning is always present, if it is obscured by cloud.

The simplest and most effective way to assess the distance of lightning is the 30-second rule. If there is less than 30 seconds between lightning and thunder, then the lightning is within 10km of the listener.

When a lightning strike is within 10km of the event, match officials and administrators who are responsible for the event must suspend play and ensure players, match officials, coaches, and spectators are removed from the playing area to a safe place, such as a large, structurally sound building.

Recommencement of play can occur after a period of 30 minutes after the last sound of thunder is heard to satisfy the 30-second rule.

#### 2.8 High Wind

High winds have the potential to create dangerous conditions for players, match officials, coaches, volunteers, and spectators. The relevant match officials and administrators must ensure the health, safety and well-being of players,

match officials, coaches, volunteers and spectators as the overriding priority and where windy conditions create an unacceptable risk and have the authority under this Policy to suspend or cancel play.

Examples of windy conditions which create an unacceptable risk and where play may be suspended:

- Foreign objects being blown onto the playing surface
- Playing surface furniture or fixtures being disturbed
- Fences or playing surface equipment being damaged
- Player health being affected by the force of wind

## 2.9 Sand, Dust or Smoke (Airborne Contaminants)

Any situation in which the air quality is compromised presents a risk to players, match officials, coaches, volunteers, and spectators, especially if they have pre-existing medical conditions.

Airborne contaminants can come in many forms, but the most common are sand, dust or smoke.

The relevant match officials and administrators must ensure the health, safety and well-being of players, match officials, coaches, volunteers, and spectators as the overriding priority and where the air quality conditions create an unacceptable risk, have the authority under this Policy to suspend play.

If smoke is present, it is recommended that the source is determined to ensure that the smoke is not toxic, not likely to worsen or is not due to a fire in the vicinity. If the smoke presents any danger, through reduction in visibility or ability to breathe properly, then play must be suspended or cancelled and all players, match officials, coaches, volunteers and spectators removed to a safe area.

## 2.10 Other Conditions

Unless otherwise previously advised by Football West of a required rescheduled and/or cancellation of the game, the match official has sole and absolute discretion to determine if the weather conditions pose a danger to participants.

Where the match official on the day of the match, makes such a determination the game may be abandoned or delayed until it is safe to proceed (if time permits). Where a game is abandoned or delayed, the match official is to submit a report into Football West within 24 hours.

## 2.11 Postponement and/or delay of Fixtures

The postponement and/or delay of fixtures process is outlined in the Football West Competition Rules.

# 3. Useful Resources

## 3.1 Statutes, Policies and Other Official Documents

- [Sports Medicine Australia Hot Weather Guidelines](#)
- [Sports Medicine Australia Beat the Heat Fact Sheet](#)
- [Sports Medicine Australia UV Exposure and Heat Illness Guide](#)
- Football West – Competition Rules



### 3.2 Websites

- <http://www.bom.gov.au/wa/forecasts/map7day.shtml>
- <http://www.bom.gov.au/weather-services/about/thunderstorm-tracker.shtml>
- <http://satview.bom.gov.au/>

## 4. Definitions and Interpretation

### Definitions

The following capitalised terms, when not appearing in headings, have the following meanings when used in this Policy. Capitalised terms used in the Constitution bear the same meaning when those terms are used in this Policy.

**AMS** means FW Amateur Leagues

**BOM** means the Australian Bureau of Meteorology.

**CEO** means the Football West Chief Executive Officer.

**Club** means:

1. a body corporate or incorporated Association recognised by Football West and that organises teams to participate in competitions sanctioned by Football West or FFA; or
2. any legal entity deemed to be a Club by Football West.

**Club Support** Football West Administration team. Operating 7 days a week during season. Contactable via [clubsupport@footballwest.com.au](mailto:clubsupport@footballwest.com.au)

**Competition** means any league, competition or tournament administered, controlled or sanctioned by Football West including pre-season, season proper, finals series and any post season tournament or competition.

**Competition Match** means a Match that is part of a Competition.

**FA** means Football Australia Limited ACN 106 478 068.

**FIFA** means Fédération Internationale de Football Association.

**Football West** means Football West Limited ACN 109 919 324.

**Friendly Match** means a Match that is not a Competition Match.

**Junior Match** means a Competition Match in which the players are all 18 years old or younger.

**Match** means any football match played in Western Australia under the auspices of Football West, FFA or an Association or otherwise played under Football West's direction or control.

**Match Official** means a referee, assistant referee, fourth official, referee assessor or match commissioner or any other person appointed by Football West Administration or a Competition Administrator to assume responsibility in connection with a Match.

**Policy** means this Football West Extreme Weather Policy as amended by the CEO from time to time.

**Senior Match** means a Competition Match that is not a Junior Match.

**Sports Medicine Australia** means the Australian Sports Medicine Federation Ltd ABN 54 002 794 998

**SL** means FW State League

**Squadi** means the Football West Competition Management System

**WL** means FW Women's League

## **Interpretation**

Unless the context otherwise requires:

- headings are for convenience of reference only and do not affect interpretation;
- references to any gender include all genders;
- references to the singular apply to the plural and vice versa;
- references to a person include any other entity recognised by law and vice versa;
- where a word or phrase is defined, its other grammatical forms have a corresponding meaning;
- any reference to a paragraph number refers to a paragraph in the same sub-section unless otherwise stated;
- any reference to a party to this document includes its successors and permitted assigns;
- any reference to any agreement or document includes that agreement or document as amended at any time;
- the use of the word includes or including is not to be taken as limiting the meaning of the words preceding it;
- the expression at any time includes reference to past, present and future time and the performance of any action from time to time;
- reference to a statute includes all regulations and amendments to that statute and any statute passed in substitution for that statute or incorporating any of its provisions to the extent that they are incorporated; and
- all monetary amounts are inclusive of GST unless stated otherwise.