



Policy #14

Heat & Hydration Policy

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Foundation for all sports

Little Athletics Tasmania Heat and Hydration Policy

Exercise & Hydration in Extreme Temperatures

(This policy may be adapted to suit local conditions and requirements)

1. General

- 1.1 Children and adolescents are covered simultaneously by the recommendations in these guidelines.
- 1.2 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 is provided.
- 1.3 It is recommended that greater care be taken of athletes who are not fit or who are overweight, when exercising in high temperatures.

2. Education

- 2.1 All athletes should be educated on the importance of sun safety and how to be sun smart. This should be conducted at the beginning of the hot weather season, however, if this is untimely for Centres then it should be conducted at a more appropriate time.

3. Attire

- 3.1 All athletes should be wearing sun safe attire at competition days and whilst exposed to the sun (except when competing), hats or caps should also be worn.
- 3.2 All Board/Executive members, staff members, officials and volunteers must be seen setting a sun smart example. During competitions they are encouraged to wear collared shirts, hats and where appropriate sunglasses.

4. Sunscreen

- 4.1 Sunscreen should be provided and located in and around the competition arena. In doing so we are ensuring it is as convenient as possible for athletes, staff, officials and volunteers to use.
- 4.2 The sunscreen must be of the highest quality and meet all Australian standards.

5. Shade

- 5.1 Shade should be provided at all field events, marshalling and finish areas. It should also be provided in other areas where participants, staff, officials and volunteers will be waiting for long periods of time unprotected from the sun.

6. Public Announcements

- 6.1 It is recommended that during competition, public announcements be regularly made reminding those at the event to keep drinking water, apply sunscreen and remain in the shade wherever possible.

This will not only help to keep fluid intake and sun safety high but also ensure the Association/Centre is discharging its duty of care to its members. In addition it will be a positive public relations tool for Little Athletics. Little Athletics will be seen as an organisation that is constantly considering the health and safety of its members, staff, volunteers and spectators.

7. Fluids

- 7.1 It is recommended that athletes, officials and volunteers drink at least 7-8ml of fluid per Kg of body mass to diminish the risk of heat illness (about 500 ml for a 65 kg person).
- 7.2 Children can stave off dehydration during 3 hours of exercise in 35°C heat if enough fluid is consumed.
- 7.3 Fluid should begin to be consumed at least two hours before exercising to promote adequate hydration and allow time for excretion of excess water.
- 7.4 There should be number of water stations in and around the competition arena. They should be located at all field events, marshalling areas and the finish line.
- 7.5 The water supplied should be cooler than the ambient temperature, as this will aid in the cooling process.
- 7.6 In addition to water, diluted sports drinks, cordial and fruit juices should also be made available. Not only will this make the fluids more palatable to the younger participants but it will also be beneficial for replacing fluids, energy and electrolytes lost during exercise. It will delay the onset of exercise-induced exhaustion and hence aid in the prevention of heat stroke.
- 7.7 Additional water should also be provided so as to allow participants to douse themselves and thereby assisting in the cooling process. E.g. spray bottles, hoses and buckets etc.

8. Postponement/Cancellation

- 8.1 It is recommended that parents and officials use caution if athletes are exercising in ambient temperatures above 35°C for an extended period of time (more than 1 hour).
- 8.2 When children are exercising in the heat parents and officials must also pay close attention to athletes doing intermittent events (jumps & throws) as well as continuous events.
- 8.3 It is recommended that each competition venue have the necessary equipment to record ambient temperatures throughout the competition.
- 8.4 It is recommended that events be called off if it is thought ambient temperature is likely to rise above 35°C.
- 8.5 On the day of competition it is recommended the ambient temperature be recorded at 15-minute intervals at the same point on the track each time.
- 8.6 It is recommended that if the temperature is over the cutoff for two (2) consecutive measurements that no new event should be called until the temperature drops below the cutoff OR competition should be ceased until the temperature drops below the cutoff.
- 8.7 Consideration should also be given to postponing field events that span a considerable time.

Appendix A

What is heat injury?

Heat injury may present itself in varied forms, including cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

Heat Exhaustion

Dehydration can lead to Heat Exhaustion. Symptoms of heat exhaustion may include: -

- high heart rate
- dizziness
- headache
- loss of endurance/skill
- confusion
- nausea
- the skin may still be cool/sweating, but there will be signs of developing vasoconstriction, e.g. pale colour.
- athletes will pass little urine, which will be highly concentrated.
- cramps may be associated with dehydration.
- the rectal temperature may be up to 35C and the athlete may collapse on stopping activity.

If an athlete is exhibiting signs of heat stress or heat exhaustion they should stop, drink more fluids and cool down. Remove the athlete from the field, lay the victim down in a cool place and give plenty of cool water. If the 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.

Heat stroke symptoms include: -

- dry skin
- confusion
- collapsing

If an athlete is showing any symptoms of heat stroke take the following action:

- call a Doctor or Ambulance immediately
- remove from the field and lay the victim down in a cool place
- give cool water to drink if conscious
- cool the players by putting in a cool bath, shower or under hose, applying wrapped icepacks to the groin and armpits or use wet towels.
- maximise airflow over the player through the use of a fan or fan them with towels.