

**coles**



**Coles Little Athletics Australia**

**ALAC Extreme Weather Policy**

## **OVERVIEW**

This Policy aims to provide Coles Little Athletics Australia (LAA) a set of strategies to provide a safe environment in regards to weather events, and to reduce the likelihood of illness or injuries occurring as a result of inclement weather. This Policy covers weather events such as heat, sunshine, cold, rain, lightning or other unusual or unpredictable weather conditions.

The postponement, cancellation or continuation of the ALAC will be at the discretion of the ALAC Competition Committee which consists of-

LAA Competition & Standards Director

LAA Chief Executive Officer

LAA nominated host state Member Association representative

## **PURPOSE**

In extreme weather conditions the ALAC Competition Committee may decide to modify the schedule of relevant disciplines to protect athletes, officials and other participants from exposure to the elements or physical stress.

As the ALAC Competition Committee has the authority to direct the postponement or cancellation of such events if conditions pose an unacceptable risk to the health and safety of participants, officials or spectators.

## **POLICY AIMS**

- To protect the health, safety and wellbeing of all who participate in the activities and events at the ALAC
- To ensure that the ALAC venue is a safe place to compete, spectate and officiate as far as is reasonably practicable; and
- Provide guidance to Event and Competition organisers regarding the effective management of extreme weather conditions

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

The ALAC Competition Committee will closely monitor weather forecasts and seek to comply with the following guidelines when conducting or managing extreme weather at the ALAC.

## **GENERAL**

- 1) The ALAC Competition Committee responsible for conducting and managing the ALAC must be aware of weather forecasts and plan accordingly to minimise the risk of inclement weather affecting athletes, officials and spectators.
- 2) All Officials and participants should be made aware of the chain of command for event management and control. It should be clear who has the authority to
  - a) Suspend and subsequently resume the activity or event;
  - b) Cancel the activity or event;
  - c) Communicate with stakeholders regarding decisions made about the activity or event.

Ultimately the Competition & Standards Director is the designated Event Director for the ALAC.

- 3) Where weather or other conditions threaten the immediate safety of the athletes, spectators, officials or any other persons on the competition or event site, the relevant officials responsible may suspend or postpone the event until such time that in his/her opinion the threat to safety is no longer evident.
- 4) Where the event is cancelled due to bad weather if 50% of events have been completed the overall trophy winners will be presented as per the current points in Meet Manager. If less than half of the events have been completed then no trophies will be awarded.

## **HEAT**

Heat-related injuries or illness pose a risk to athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers and spectators at ALAC. Heat illness can occur across all events and at temperature levels well below those considered to be a risk. A heat illness in sport may present itself in a variety of forms including heat exhaustion and the more severe heat stroke.

The management of extreme heat at the ALAC is vital to the health, safety and welfare of athletes.

### **Preparation**

If hot weather is likely to occur the ALAC Competition Committee in conjunction with the ALAC Committee will ensure that there is sufficient shade at all field events, marshalling and finish areas.

Ensure that there is a number of water stations in and around the competition area and additional water provided so as to allow participants to wet their face, clothes and hair to assist the cooling process.

The ALAC Competition Committee will determine the continuation of the ALAC in extreme heat.

## **HIGH WINDS**

High winds have the potential to create dangerous conditions for athletes, spectators and officials. Where these winds create unreasonable risks within the track area activities may need to be suspended by the ALAC Competition Committee. Hazards may include furniture or fixtures disturbed, items being blown onto the field or track, or athletes health threatened by the force of the wind.

## **WET WEATHER**

The postponement, cancellation or continuation of the ALAC due to rain will be at the discretion of the ALAC Competition Committee.

Participant safety will remain paramount when deciding to postpone/continue the ALAC in the rain, and environmental factors such as the track surface, pooling of water, visibility etc. will be taken into consideration.

1. If it is raining heavily, and there are safety concerns, activities may be discontinued for a period of time and conditions reassessed to determine whether activities should continue.
2. If a hail storm occurs during the ALAC, the ALAC Competition Committee will assess the situation and may potentially suspend events and participants should seek suitable protective cover.
3. The LAA Competition & Standards Director will be responsible for conducting and managing the ALAC and will take the necessary steps to ensure that the track surface, field surface and surrounds are safe for use. The ALAC Competition Committee will inspect the site for each discipline to determine its suitability for use before any activities are commenced or resumed.
4. If a hail storm occurs during an event, all activities should be suspended (by the ALAC Competition Committee) and participants should seek suitable protective cover.
5. If it is raining heavily, and there are safety concerns, activities may be discontinued for a period of time (by the ALAC Competition Committee) and conditions reassessed to determine whether activities should continue.

## **LIGHTNING**

When thunderstorms threaten, the ALAC Competition Committee will assess the situation ensuring the safety of athletes, officials and spectators.

The ALAC Competition Committee in coordination with the ALAC committee will ensure all athletes, officials and spectators where possible are inside a safe shelter during a thunderstorm.

### **Lightning Facts**

- All thunderstorms produce lightning and are dangerous.
- Lightning often strikes outside the area of heavy rain and may strike as far as fifteen kilometres from any

rainfall.

- Any time thunder is heard, the thunderstorm is close enough to pose an immediate lightning threat to your location.
- When thunderstorms are in the area but not overhead, the lightning threat can still exist even when overhead it is sunny, not raining, or when clear sky is visible.
- Many lightning casualties occur before the thunder storm rains have moved into the area. This is often due to people not seeking shelter soon enough.
- Large numbers of casualties occur after the rain dissipates. This can be due to people being in too much of a hurry to go back outside and resume activities.

## **Emergency Action Plan Recommendations**

### **1. Chain of Command**

The ALAC Competition Committee has the authority to call for suspension and subsequent resumption of activities

### **2. Weather Watcher**

The ALAC Competition Committee will monitor the weather forecasts in the days leading up to the event, and will also on the day look for signs of developing local thunderstorms such as high winds, darkening clouds and any lightning of thunder.

### **3. Providing Warnings**

The ALAC Competition Committee in conjunction with the ALAC Committee will promote lightning safety to athletes, officials and spectators. A protocol will be put in place to warn all individuals at risk from a lightning strike.

The ALAC Competition Committee will ensure lightning safety messages are read out over the PA system if thunderstorms are forecast or are imminent which will include-

- Criteria for suspension and resumption of activities
- The location of safe shelters and the best way to access them.

### **4. Safe structures and locations**

A list of safe structures and locations to evacuate to in the event of lightning will be determined by the ALAC Committee.

#### *Safe structures*

The primary choice for a safe structure is a large, fully enclosed building

If a building is not available, a fully enclosed vehicle with a metal roof and the windows completely closed is a reasonable alternative

#### *Unsafe locations and situations*

An open field

Close vicinity to the tallest structure in the area (e.g. Tree/s, light pole, discus cage)

Small structures such as rain/picnic shelters, tents, equipment sheds

Use of electrical appliances

Umbrellas or any object that increases a person's height

### **5. Criteria for suspension and resumption of activities**

The sound of thunder will serve as an immediate warning of lightning danger. Generally speaking, if an individual can see lightning/or hear thunder he/she is already at risk.

A procedure for announcing the suspension and resumption of activities will be put in place by the ALAC committee prior to the ALAC.

### *The 30-30 rule*

By the time the flash-to-bang count approaches 30 seconds, all individuals should already be inside a safe shelter.

- Wait at least 30 minutes after the last sound (thunder) or observation of lightning and ensure conditions are completely safe before leaving shelter to resume activities. Each time lightning is observed or thunder is heard, the 30 minute clock should be re-started.
- The National Lightning Safety Institute in the US recommends the saying: "If you can see it, flee it; if you can hear it, clear it".
- Follow your set criteria for the suspension and resumption of activities without exception.

### **6. First aid**

Lightning victims do not carry an electrical charge, are safe to handle, and need immediate medical attention. Cardiac arrest is the immediate cause of death in lightning fatalities. Some deaths can be prevented if the victim receives the proper first aid:

- Call 00 at once
- Check the victim's pulse and breathing. Begin CPR if necessary.
- If possible, move the victim to a safe place. Be aware that the thunderstorm may still be

### **SMOKE & DUST**

Smoke and airborne dust are by-products of a number of other extreme conditions including weather and can create a possible risk for people with certain conditions i.e. asthma, heart conditions.

The ALAC Weather Committee will be aware of these extreme conditions and take necessary steps to suspend activities in the case of a significant potential risk.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **ALAC Competition Committee**

Ensure that policies and procedures reflect current recommendations for reducing and managing risks associated with weather conditions.

#### **LAA Competition & Standards Director**

Act as Event Director for ALAC and exercise the authority to postpone or cancel the ALAC if conditions pose an unacceptable risk to health and safety of participants, officials or spectators

#### **Officials**

Be aware of prevailing weather conditions and how that may affect athletes, officials and spectators at the event and apply this Extreme Weather Policy

#### **Athletes / Participants**

Be aware of prevailing weather conditions and of this policy. Alert the officials of any safety concerns. Follow the directions of authorised officials.