



Extreme Weather Policy

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Due For Review	October 2025

Extreme weather and environmental factors can affect the playing of Australian Football. This policy sets out the approach that the EDFL adopts when assessing extreme weather and environmental conditions at training and during matches.

Heat

Heat stress and injury can lead to impaired player performance and physical distress including dizziness, headaches, collapsing and illness. In its extreme form it can be life threatening. To prevent heat stress, careful planning and preparation is required.

EDFL Matches

The EDFL takes the health and wellbeing of its players, coaches, officials and volunteers very seriously and the following information outlines the elements of the EDFL's strategy to prevent heat stress in match conditions:

- When temperatures are forecast above 32°C at the scheduled commencement of the match (as per www.bom.gov.au or BOM App), clubs and umpires will be notified via the EDFL Website by no later than 5pm on the Thursday that the EDFL Extreme Weather Policy may be implemented.
- If required, a formal announcement will be made on the EDFL Website between 9.30am and 11.00am on the day of the match advising clubs and umpires that the EDFL Extreme Weather Policy is to be adhered to and the following changes shall be applied based on the below tables:

Men's Seniors

	EDFL Rules	Extreme Weather Policy Changes
Quarter Lengths	20 minutes plus time on	15 minutes plus time on
Quarter Time Break	5 minutes	10 minutes
Half Time Break	15 minutes	20 minutes
Three Quarter Time Break	5 minutes	10 minutes
Number of water carriers	2	Up to 4 given they supply water to umpires

Men's Reserves

	EDFL Rules	Extreme Weather Policy Changes
Quarter Lengths	25 minutes no time on	19 minutes no time on
Quarter Time Break	5 minutes	10 minutes
Half Time Break	15 minutes	20 minutes
Three Quarter Time Break	5 minutes	10 minutes
Number of water carriers	2	Up to 4 given they supply water to umpires

Women's Seniors & Men's U18.5s

	EDFL Rules	Extreme Weather Policy Changes
Quarter Lengths	20 minutes no time on	15 minutes no time on
Quarter Time Break	5 minutes	10 minutes
Half Time Break	15 minutes	20 minutes
Three Quarter Time Break	5 minutes	10 minutes
Number of water carriers	2	Up to 4 given they supply water to umpires

Women's U18.5s

	EDFL Rules	Extreme Weather Policy Changes
Quarter Lengths	17 minutes no time on	13 minutes no time on
Quarter Time Break	5 minutes	10 minutes
Half Time Break	15 minutes	20 minutes
Three Quarter Time Break	5 minutes	10 minutes
Number of water carriers	2	Up to 4 given they supply water to umpires

U16 Boys

	EDFL Rules	Extreme Weather Policy Changes
Quarter Lengths	20 minutes no time on	15 minutes no time on
Quarter Time Break	5 minutes	10 minutes
Half Time Break	10 minutes	15 minutes
Three Quarter Time Break	5 minutes	10 minutes
Number of water carriers	2	Up to 4 given they supply water to umpires

U16 Girls, U14 Girls & U14 Mixed

	EDFL Rules	Extreme Weather Policy Changes
Quarter Lengths	15 minutes no time on	12 minutes no time on
Quarter Time Break	5 minutes	8 minutes
Half Time Break	10 minutes	15 minutes
Three Quarter Time Break	5 minutes	8 minutes
Number of water carriers	2	Up to 4 given they supply water to umpires

U12 Mixed

	EDFL Rules	Extreme Weather Policy Changes
Quarter Lengths	15 minutes no time on	12 minutes no time on
Quarter Time Break	5 minutes	8 minutes
Half Time Break	10 minutes	15 minutes
Three Quarter Time Break	5 minutes	8 minutes
Number of water carriers	0	Up to 2 given they supply water to umpires

U12 Girls, U10 Girls & U10 Mixed

	EDFL Rules	Extreme Weather Policy Changes
Quarter Lengths	12 minutes no time on	9 minutes no time on
Quarter Time Break	5 minutes	8 minutes
Half Time Break	10 minutes	15 minutes
Three Quarter Time Break	5 minutes	8 minutes
Number of water carriers	0	Up to 2 given they supply water to umpires

U8 Girls & U8 Mixed

	EDFL Rules	Extreme Weather Policy Changes
Quarter Lengths	10 minutes no time on	8 minutes no time on
Quarter Time Break	5 minutes	7 minutes
Half Time Break	5 minutes	8 minutes
Three Quarter Time Break	5 minutes	7 minutes
Number of water carriers	0	Up to 2 given they supply water to umpires

If the temperature is equal to, or greater than 32°C at the scheduled commencement of the match:

- The teams and umpires are able to leave the field during the breaks if so desired.

If the temperature is equal to, or greater than 36°C at the scheduled commencement of the match:

- The match shall be delayed for up to 30 minutes. If the temperature has not dropped below 36°C, the match shall then be cancelled.
- If, during the course of an EDFL match, the temperature rises to above 36°C then the match shall be suspended for up to 30 minutes. If the temperature has not dropped below 36°C, the match shall then be cancelled.
- If the match is cancelled and/or unable to commence due to excessive heat conditions (as determined by the EDFL Extreme Weather Policy), EDFL Football Operations staff shall determine how the premiership points for the match will be allocated in accordance with the AFL Laws of the Game

The umpires will be responsible for making the decision to delay or cancel a game at a quarter break with the team managers responsible for notifying umpires if the temperatures rises to 36°C or above during the course of play.

All temperature readings will be from the www.bom.gov.au or BOM App and taken from the location of the match.

Training

All Clubs competing in a competition administered by the EDFL should monitor environmental factors such as extreme heat at any Australian Football training session conducted by the Club. The Club should assess the heat stress risk by reviewing information provided by the Bureau of Meteorology. Heat stress management strategies should also be applied at all training sessions administered by the Club.

The following general guidelines should be followed:

Clubs should:

- a) use cooling aids if available – ice vests, spray bottles, sponges, fans and shade;
- b) use a Club official to be delegated the primary responsibility of monitoring and manage players for heat stress issues as they arise at training;
- c) provide adequate fluids in appropriate bottles;
- d) ensure trainers are fit enough to access as many players as possible during training;
- e) coordinate training times outside extreme conditions; and
- f) provide facilities for player cooling – shade, air conditioning, sprays and fans whether training or playing.
- g) No training should be conducted in temperatures above 36°C.

Lightning

In the absence of specific information from weather radar, a lightning location system, or a specialised warning device then the 30/30 Safety Guideline should be used. According to the 30/30 Safety Guideline, when lightning is considered to be a possible or actual threat to an Australian Football Match the following procedures are applicable:

- a) The observation of approaching storm clouds, the first flash of lightning or clap of thunder, no matter how far away should heighten lightning awareness. The level of risk depends on one's location (direction and distance) relative to the storm cell and the direction in which the storm system is traveling.
- b) A simple method of determining the distance to the storm cell is to measure the time elapsed from when the lightning flash is observed and when the associated clap of thunder is heard.
- c) Light travels faster than sound. Assuming that the light from the flash reaches the observer instantaneously, and knowing that sound takes approximately three (3) seconds to travel one (1) kilometre, the distance can be determined by using the following rule:

$$\text{Distance (in Km)} = \text{Time from observing the flash to hearing thunder (in 3 seconds)}$$

The first part of the "30/30" rule is a guide to the postponement or suspension of activities. Most experts agree that the accepted "safe" distance from lightning is greater than 10km. This means that as the time interval between observing the flash and hearing the thunder approaches 30 seconds, all those in exposed areas should be seeking or already inside safe shelters. A storm cell with lightning activity within 10km constitutes a threat.

The second part of the 30/30 rule provides the criteria for the resumption of activity which is applicable to decisions made with BOM access as well. Here, it is recommended that people wait a minimum of 30 minutes after the last sighting of lightning or sound of thunder. This figure is based on the observation that the typical storm moves at about 40km/h. Thus, waiting 30 minutes allows the thunderstorm to be about 20km away, minimising the likelihood of a nearby lightning strike.

Process:

1. If an EDFL umpire believes that there is any danger posed by lightning during or prior to the commencement of an EDFL match then they shall suspend or not commence the match.
2. A member of the umpiring panel shall inform the two clubs of the decision to suspend or not commence the match.

3. A member of the umpiring panel shall contact the EDFL Umpire Manager (or delegate) and/or an EDFL Football Operations Staff Member to inform them of the extreme weather situation.
4. The umpire shall then contact the EDFL Umpire Manager (or delegate) and/or an EDFL Football Operations Staff Member when there has been no consecutive thunder for 30 seconds.
5. This will then commence the 30-minute period that must be served before any decision to recommence an EDFL match is made.
6. The EDFL Football Operations department may instruct the umpires to cancel the remainder of the game, shorten quarters (if the match is to be recommenced) or complete the full remainder of the match depending on the circumstances of the match.
 - a. A general guide will be that a match can be delayed by up to 60 minutes before being cancelled providing that no other factors are involved which may limit the ability for the match to be completed (this may include, but are not limited to, inadequate lighting, games scheduled following the match or unsafe conditions).
7. If the match is cancelled and/or unable to commence due to lightning (as determined by the EDFL Extreme Weather Policy), EDFL Football Operations staff shall determine how the premiership points for the match shall be allocated in accordance with the AFL Laws of the Game.

Training

The following general guidelines should be followed at EDFL training sessions:

- a) If a lightning threat emerges, the nominated Club Official must contact all relevant coaching, rehabilitation and training staff and provide updates on a regular basis.
- b) A decision to delay, suspend or resume training should be made in consultation with relevant coaching and administration staff and a conservative approach should be taken.
- c) If players are training when the lightning threat becomes real then they should leave the training venue immediately and take shelter inside a building or metal framed car. They should not shelter under or near trees.
- d) Once the storm's path has been reassessed as safe, there must be a minimum of 30 minutes elapsed before returning to training.
- e) When there is no access to the BOM, the "30/30" rule serves as a guide for the suspension and subsequent resumption of activities.

Sun / UV protection

A Person may be exposed to ultraviolet (UV) light when participating in Australian Football. Prolonged exposure to UV light can result in sunburn, chronic sun damage to both skin and eyes and increase the risk of precancerous and cancerous skin lesions. Sport-specific factors such as increased sweating can increase skin

photosensitivity and result in an increased risk of sunburn. A Person should undertake sun protection measures for all outdoor activities, particularly when the UV levels are 3 or greater. The World Health Organisation (WHO) outlines the UV radiation exposure categories or UV Index (UVI) with levels from 0 low to 11+ extreme.

Exposure Category UVI Range

Exposure Category	UV Range
Low	<2
Moderate	3 to 5
High	6 to 7
Very High	8 to 10
Extreme	11+

Australian Football is only one contributor to a Person's overall sun exposure and a Person should apply these guidelines to non-football related leisure and work activities.

Club and Person responsibility

- (a) Clubs are encouraged to develop specific sun protection guidelines that are relevant to their geographic location and training requirements. A sport-specific sun protection guideline template can be found on the SunSmart website.
- (b) Club Officers should download the SunSmart Mobile Application to assist with monitoring of daily UV levels.
- (c) Where possible, Clubs should reduce sun exposure for Players and Football Officials by scheduling outdoor training sessions outside of times of peak UV levels (i.e. early morning or late afternoon noting that UV levels are higher in the middle of the day).
- (d) Training sessions undertaken when UV levels are high should be reduced in duration where possible.
- (e) Clubs should provide shade for Football Officials participating at training sessions and Matches. Additional shade structures on the benches for Matches should also be considered when matches are played when high UV levels are 3 or greater.
- (f) At times when Players and Football Officials have an increased risk of sun exposure, the following additional measures should be employed:
 - i. SPF 50+ water-resistant sunscreen should be available at all outdoor training sessions and matches when the UV levels are (or are expected to be) greater than 3. Expired sunscreen should not be used.
 - ii. Players and Football Officials should be educated by Clubs to apply a generous amount of sunscreen to all exposed skin at least 30 minutes before sun exposure and sweating occurs and reapplied every 2 hours.

- iii. Zinc based sunscreens can be used as an alternative and applied to high exposure areas such as the face.
- iv. Where possible, long-sleeved clothing, with Ultraviolet Protection Factor (UPF) should be worn. A UPF rating above 15 is suitable however the EDFL recommends a 50+ UPF rating.
- v. Players and Football Officials should wear a hat and sunglasses for outdoor training sessions where practical.

Players and Football Officials should perform regular self-examination of their skin and consult a doctor if they become aware of any changes. These might include new freckles or moles or a change in size, colour or shape.

Cancelled Matches

- If half or more than half of the games are cancelled or abandoned due to extreme weather in the same grade and division, the round will be declared void and no premiership points, percentages, goalkickers or best and fairest votes will be awarded or applied for that round. Matches will count towards finals qualification so long as teams submit their team sheet on the day of the match. Any reportable offence or blue card will proceed according to the usual process.
- If a match does not reach the half-time break before it is cancelled, the match will be declared a draw and no best and fairest votes will be awarded for that match.