

Extreme Weather Policy

Introduction

Environmental factors regularly affect the conduct of Balmoral Highland Dancing Society Inc.(BHDS) events. While environmental factors will not usually influence whether an BHDS event should commence or continue, occasionally extremely adverse weather conditions may give rise to a need to assess whether participants, officials and spectators are in environmental danger.

Extreme weather may be defined as including weather that threatens the immediate or long-term safety of individuals, as a result of heat, rain, lightning, wind, or other unusual or unpredictable weather conditions.

Extreme weather can pose a health risk. Participating in hot and humid conditions in particular can impair the body's ability to lose heat. Children normally self-regulate their exercise intensity in hot conditions so the greatest risk is when they are required to continue dancing when their brain is telling them to stop. Older dancers, in particular those with specific illnesses such as diabetes or heart disease, may also be at increased risk.

In extreme weather conditions officials and administrators in charge of BHDS events may decide to modify the program to protect dancers, officials and other participants from exposure to the elements or physical stress. There are also a number of other pro-active and preventative measures that can be taken which are mentioned later in this document.

As Promoter for all official BHDS events, the 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.

Purpose

The policy is designed to protect people from injury and illness that may result by participating in dancing events in extreme weather conditions. The policy recognises that all dancers can be at risk although children can be at greater risk in some instances, especially heat stress.

Competition and event organisers have a duty of care to dancers, officials and other participants, which may include regularly monitoring environmental conditions and to take action to minimise the risk of heat stress or threat of illness or injury to dancers, officials and other participants.

Policy Aims

- To protect the health, safety and wellbeing of all who participate in the activities of BHDS events;
- To ensure that venues are 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

Officials and administrators responsible for conducting and managing BHDS events must closely and regularly monitor weather forecasts and seek to comply with the following guidelines when conducting or managing extreme weather at events and competitions.

1) GENERAL

- a) Relevant officials responsible for conducting and managing BHDS events must be aware of weather forecasts and plan accordingly to minimise the risk of inclement weather affecting dancers, officials and spectators.
- b) All Officials and participants should be made aware of the chain of command for event management and control. It should be clear that the committee
 - i) Suspend and subsequently resume the activity or event;
 - ii) Cancel the activity or event;
 - iii) Communicate with stakeholders regarding decisions made about the activity or event.
- c) Where weather or other conditions threaten the immediate safety of the dancers, 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 their opinion the threat to safety is no longer evident.
- d) Considerations which must be taken into account when determining the level of risk are for an average person involved in continuous strenuous activity in high temperatures are listed below. Individual persons will be affected differently by the environmental conditions depending on their:
 - i) Fitness level
 - ii) Athletic ability
 - iii) Age
 - iv) Gender
 - v) Any predisposed medical conditions; and
 - vi) Level of acclimatisation

2) HOT WEATHER

For further detail see Heat policy

3) HIGH WINDS

- a) High winds have the potential to create dangerous conditions for dancers, spectators and officials. Where these winds create unreasonable risks within the area activities may need to be suspended by relevant Committee responsible for conducting and managing events. Hazards may include furniture or fixtures disturbed, items being blown onto the area, or dancers health threatened by the force of the wind.

4) WET WEATHER

- a) If it is raining, and there are safety concerns, activities may be discontinued for a period of time and conditions reassessed to determine whether activities should continue.
- b) If a hail storm occurs during an event, all activities should be suspended and participants should seek suitable protective cover.

- c) Relevant officials responsible for conducting and managing dancing events must take the necessary steps to ensure that the stage surface and surrounds are safe for use. It is essential that the Safety Officer inspect the site for to determine its suitability for use before any activities are commenced or resumed.

5) LIGHTNING

- a) In Australia, approximately 25% of people killed by lightning are playing sport. When thunderstorms threaten, the relevant officials responsible for conducting and managing dancing events must assess the situation ensuring the safety of dancers, officials and spectators.
- b) Generally speaking when an individual can see lightning and/or hear thunder he/she is already at risk.
- c) Relevant officials responsible for conducting and managing dancing events must ensure that all dancers, officials and spectators where possible are inside a safe shelter during a thunderstorm.

Lightning Facts

- All thunderstorms produce lightning and are dangerous
- 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 if it is sunny overhead, not raining, or when clear sky is visible

The 30/30 rule lightning

- 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 minutes clock should be re-started.

6) SMOKE & DUST

- a) 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.
- b) Relevant officials responsible for managing and conducting dancing events and competitions must be aware of these extreme conditions and take necessary steps to suspend activities in the case of a significant potential risk.

Total Fire Bans

- 1) In extreme hot weather conditions a 'Total Fire Ban' restriction will act as the mechanism for review of the event.
- 2) If 'Total Fire Ban' restrictions have been assigned to the location of a competition it must be moved indoors .
- 3) If on the day of the event extreme heat (38°), high winds, wet weather, lightning and smoke/dust are impacting on the event it must be move indoors, postponed or cancelled.