



## **Volleyball ACT**

### **Extreme Weather Policy**

**Date of Issue Oct 2021**

Last Reviewed  
Controlling Body

Oct 2021  
VACT Board

## **Overview**

Volleyball ACT (VACT) Extreme Weather Policy has been introduced to reduce the risk of weather related injury to players, coaches, and officials involved in VACT competitions, events or activities. The policy also contains a number of guidelines to assist players, coaches, and officials in recognising and managing extreme weather conditions.

This Policy is not intended to be a medical document.

## **Background**

Extreme weather mainly impacts upon outside volleyball related activities, but some elements can include indoor events and competitions. For the purposes of this Policy it includes temperature, humidity, wet weather, strong wind and electrical storms.

## **Policy Application**

This Policy applies to all VACT members and all other people or organisations which by agreement or otherwise, are bound to comply with this policy (including contractors, board members, employees, administrators, officials, volunteers and attendees at functions of VACT).

This policy applies to behaviour and practices occurring during the course of VACT business, activities, competitions and events.

## **Responsibilities**

VACT's role and contribution in making this policy work is to:

- Take all reasonable steps necessary to ensure that VACT staff, officials and participants are aware of the considerations that VACT arena managers and representatives assess weather conditions for events and competitions; and
- Potential impacts on participants and teams should there be a cancellation of an event or competition under this Policy.

This will be achieved by:

- Distributing the Policy to all Affiliates; and
- Including a copy of the Policy on the VACT website.

VACT and Affiliates member's roles and contribution is to:

- Comply with this policy and ensure information is made available;
- Ensure all significant personnel are familiar with the policy and required procedures at each level of the VACT network;
- Collaborate with VACT staff to implement best practice; and
- Report any areas of concern to VACT in a timely manner.

## Policy Statement

VACT will take all breaches of the Policy seriously and will ensure they are dealt with promptly, sensitively and confidentially. Disciplinary action may be taken against a VACT staff member who is found in breach of this Policy, in accordance with the VACT Misconduct Policy.

## Hot Weather

VACT has adopted information provided in guidelines formulated by Sports Medicine Australia to minimise risk of heat related illnesses and injuries when running sporting events in hot weather. These guidelines have been utilised by VACT in its decision making process on cancelling or modifying games and playing conditions for all indoor and outdoor volleyball events.

There are many guidelines available to support event organisers to help them decide when to cancel an event or when and how to modify an event to ensure the enjoyment and safety of players, customers, spectators and officials. VACT has chosen the mixture of ambient temperature combined with relative humidity as the most appropriate.

Outdoor and Indoor Volleyball Events will be modified or not based on the following table.

## Temperature

Ambient temperature is the most easily understood guide available, and is most useful on hot, dry days that are calm and venues have plentiful shade.

<b>Ambient temperature</b>	<b>Relative humidity</b>	<b>Risk of Heat Illness</b>	<b>Possible management for sustained physical activity</b>
15 - 20		Low	Not required
21 - 25	Exceeds 70%	Low - moderate	Increased vigilance Caution over-motivation.
26 – 30	Exceeds 60%	Moderate	Increased vigilance Caution over-motivation.
31 – 37	Exceeds 50%	High – very high	Extra drink break scheduled at 15m interval for all beach games. Beach Courts 'water sprayed on request'. Sandsocks recommended to all beach players
38 and above		Extreme	Games cancelled or delayed if possible to cooler part of day. Players should seek updates on VACT website or at venue.

Cancellation of events will only be considered if the ambient temperature exceeds 38 degrees and if games cannot be rescheduled to a later or cooler part of the day. Should the temperature exceed 38 degrees, players should consult the website or venue manager for updates on whether games or events are cancelled or rescheduled.

Where it is **not** hot and dry and if wind or lack of shade are also considerations, the Wetbulb Globe temperature should be used in making the determination by the VACT representative. This measure is available on the Australian Bureau of Meteorology website.

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**Wet Weather**

Indoor Volleyball Events will not be affected by this policy.

As an outdoor sport, it is expected that beach or grass-court volleyball activity will continue as usual in all but extreme wet weather. Extreme wet weather is defined as blinding rain or hail.

Should these weather conditions be experienced, the venue manager will call a temporary halt to play and restart the games (from the same score-line) when it is safe to do so. If it is not safe to restart, the game will be ceased and determination of result will be based on competition regulations.

**Strong Wind**

For outdoor competitions winds exceeding 35 knots (65 kph) is the recommended trigger to suspend or cancel the event or competition, but other factors such as dust or accompanied wet weather will be taken into consideration. Dust control measures such as sand wetting may be undertaken to allow for play to continue.

**Electrical Thunderstorms**

Whilst no other adverse wet weather conditions may be present in a period forecast by the Bureau of Meteorology, the potential for lightning strikes must be considered by the nominated VACT Representative when considering if to suspend or cancel an outdoor event. Lightning can strike more than 10km from the edge of a thunderstorm. It is generally agreed that 10km is the minimum safe distance from a storm.

Whenever lightening is visible in the sky surrounding the event venue, the below “30/30” guideline should be followed.

The first part of the 30/30 rule is determined by counting the seconds from when the lightning flash was seen to when the thunder is heard. Sound travels at about 1 kilometre every 3 seconds, so a 30 second interval means the storm is 10km away.

Staff should be monitoring the storm’s approach and as the flash to bang count nears 30 seconds, people at risk should already be seeking *safe shelter*\*. A “flash to bang” count of 30 seconds or less requires immediate and urgent evacuation to safety.

The second part of the 30/30 rule provides the criteria for resuming activities. It is recommended that the storm be 20km away before it is considered safe. A typical storm moves at 40km/h, so waiting 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or lightning seen provides the 20km safe distance.

The 30/30 rule is not an absolute rule. A storm may move very quickly, or not generate any lightning or thunder until it is very close, or topographical or wind conditions may prevent sound from traveling to your position. These conditions are especially common in mountain areas. It is important that staff observe weather conditions and be alert to the possibility of the above occurring.

\* ‘*safe shelter*’ acknowledges that no place is absolutely safe from lightning strikes, but some places are much safer than others. Each VACT location representative must identify its safe areas and ensure that staff are aware of them.

SAFER areas include:

- Enclosed vehicles with windows closed (car, bus, tractor with cab) not touching metal parts
- Substantial enclosed buildings;
- Low ground, sheltering in clumps of low bushes; and
- Trees of uniform height- ie forest.

UNSAFE areas include:

- High or open ground;
- Water;
- Isolated or tall trees;
- Near outdoor metal structures such as volleyball posts, fences, gates, poles, seating, ropes courses; and
- Insubstantial structures such as picnic sheds and shade shelters.

### **Participants / Players**

In all cases, each event or competition will be declared safe to play or not by the nominated VACT representative on a case by case basis using the above guidelines and information available on the Australian Bureau of Meteorology website. Players should consult the website or venue manager for updates on whether games or events are cancelled or rescheduled.

### **Document History Log**

Issue number	Date Issued	Approved by
1	Oct 2021	