

Extreme Heat Guidance

1 Introduction

- 1.1 England Hockey (EH) recognises that periods of extreme heat can present a risk to the health, safety and welfare of players, coaches, officials, volunteers and spectators.
- 1.2 This guidance sets out EH's recommended approach to planning for, managing and responding to extreme heat within hockey settings. It is intended to support clubs and organisers to make safe, proportionate and welfare-led decisions.

2 Scope

- 2.1 This guidance applies to all organised hockey activity, including:
 - Club training;
 - Matches and competitions;
 - Festivals and tournaments;
 - Camps and summer activity;
 - Pathway activity;
 - Larger club or community events.
- 2.2 This guidance should be used alongside local venue procedures, league or competition regulations, safeguarding procedures, first aid arrangements and club risk assessments.

3 England Hockey Position

- 3.1 EH recommends that clubs and organisers take a cautious approach during periods of extreme heat.
- 3.2 Hockey activity can often continue safely in warm weather, but activity should be adapted, delayed, postponed or cancelled where conditions may create an unreasonable risk.
- 3.3 No player, coach, umpire, official, volunteer or spectator should feel pressured to take part where they feel unwell or unsafe in the conditions.
- 3.4 Safeguarding must always remain paramount. Decisions about whether activity should continue, be adapted, delayed, postponed or cancelled must prioritise the welfare and safety of participants.

4 Key Principles

4.1 EH recommends that clubs and organisers:

- Check the weather forecast, UV levels and any UKHSA / Met Office Heat-Health Alert before activity takes place;
- Include extreme heat within the activity risk assessment or event risk assessment;
- Consider local conditions, including pitch surface heat, access to shade, humidity, water availability and the length or intensity of activity;
- Communicate early with players, parents, coaches, officials and volunteers where extreme heat is forecast;
- Ensure regular access to drinking water, shade and rest breaks;
- Increase drinks and cooling breaks where needed;
- Reduce the intensity or length of sessions where appropriate;
- Consider moving activity to a cooler part of the day;
- Monitor participants closely for signs of heat-related illness;
- Delay, postpone or cancel activity where it cannot be delivered safely.

5 Individuals with Increased Risk

5.1 Extreme heat can affect anyone. However, clubs should pay particular attention to:

- Children and young people;
- Older people;
- People with existing health conditions or who have recently been unwell;
- People with respiratory or cardiovascular conditions;
- People taking medication that may affect heat tolerance;
- Goalkeepers wearing protective equipment;
- Officials, coaches, spectators and/or volunteers exposed to direct sun for long periods or without easy access to shade or water;
- People who are not used to exercising in hot conditions.

6 Planning Before Activity

6.1 Where hot weather is forecast, clubs and organisers should review:

- Forecast temperature;
- Humidity;
- UV level;
- Heat-Health Alert status;
- Time of day;
- Duration of activity;
- Intensity of activity;
- Access to water;
- Access to shade or cool areas;
- First aid provision;
- Emergency access;

- Participant age and needs;
- Goalkeeper involvement and protective equipment;
- Whether activity can be moved, shortened, reduced, delayed or cancelled.

6.2 Artificial pitches can become significantly hotter than the surrounding air temperature. Clubs should consider pitch surface heat, glare and the limited availability of shade when assessing the risk.

7 Heat-Health Alerts and Suggested Response

7.1 Heat-Health Alerts should be used as a prompt for additional planning and decision-making. Clubs should not rely on the alert level alone. Local conditions, the activity being delivered and the people involved must also be considered.

Alert/Condition	EH Recommended Response
NO alert / normal warm weather	Continue to monitor conditions. Provide sensible water breaks and remind participants about hydration, sunscreen and suitable clothing.
YELLOW alert or unusually hot local conditions	Clubs complete a risk assessment and consider what additional controls are needed. This may include shorter sessions, more frequent breaks, additional shade, reduced intensity or revised timings.
AMBER alert or very hot/humid local conditions	
RED alert or severe local conditions	Organised outdoor hockey activity should not normally proceed. Activity should only take place in exceptional circumstances where a specific risk assessment confirms that it can be delivered safely with robust controls in place.

8 Adapting Hockey Activity

8.1 Where heat creates an increased risk, clubs and organisers should consider:

- Moving activity to the morning or evening;
- Reducing session length and intensity;
- Avoiding repeated high-intensity drills;
- Increasing rest breaks and drinks breaks;
- Providing shaded rest areas;
- Rotating players more frequently;
- Reducing warm-up volume;
- Limiting time in direct sun;
- Monitoring goalkeepers closely;
- Pausing activity during the hottest part of the day;
- Postponing or cancelling activity if safe delivery cannot be assured.

- 8.2 For matches or competitions, any changes to timings, format or match length should be agreed through the relevant league, competition or event organiser where required.

9 Matches, Competition and Events

- 9.1 For matches, tournaments and larger events, organisers should consider whether:
- The start time can be moved;
 - The format can be shortened;
 - Additional breaks should be built in;
 - Water is available and accessible;
 - Shaded or cool areas are available;
 - First aid provision is appropriate;
 - Officials and volunteers can be rotated;
 - Participants and parents/carers have been informed in advance;
 - There is a clear decision-maker for postponement, cancellation or changes to activity;
 - The event is able to safely continue if conditions worsen.
- 9.2 The decision to continue, adapt or stop activity should be based on welfare, not convenience or the desire to complete a fixture.

10 Communication

- 10.1 Where extreme heat is forecast, clubs and organisers should communicate early with participants, parents or carers, coaches, officials and volunteers.
- 10.2 Communication should include:
- Expected conditions;
 - Any possible or proposed changes to timings or format;
 - What people should bring, including water, sunscreen and suitable clothing;
 - Where water, shade and rest areas will be available;
 - How decisions will be made and by whom;
 - Who to contact with concerns;
 - A clear message that anyone feeling unwell should not take part.
- 10.3 For junior activity, parents and carers should be made aware of any additional precautions or changes.

11 Signs of Heat-Related Illness

- 11.1 Coaches, officials, team managers, volunteers, parents and guardians should be alert to signs of heat-related illness.
- 11.2 Signs of heat-related illness may include:
- Tiredness or weakness;
 - Dizziness;
 - Headache;
 - Feeling sick or being sick;

- Excessive sweating;
- Heat rash;
- Cramps in the arms, legs or stomach;
- Fast breathing;
- Fast heartbeat;
- High temperature;
- Confusion;
- Poor coordination.

11.3 If someone shows signs of heat-related illness, consideration should be given as to whether they should stop the activity.

12 Immediate Response

12.1 If someone becomes unwell in hot weather, their activity should be stopped immediately and the following measures implemented or considered:

- The person should be moved to a cooler or shaded place.
- Unnecessary clothing or equipment should be removed.
- The person should be encouraged to drink water if they are able to do so.
- The person should be cooled using shade, fans, cold water, wet towels, ice packs or other available methods.

12.2 The person should be monitored closely.

12.3 Medical advice should be sought if there are concerns.

12.4 999 should be called immediately if heatstroke is suspected.

12.5 Heatstroke may be suspected where someone:

- Remains unwell after resting and cooling;
- Has a very high temperature;
- Has hot skin that is not sweating;
- Has fast breathing or shortness of breath;
- Has a fast heartbeat;
- Is confused or has poor coordination;
- Has a seizure;
- Loses consciousness.

13 Roles and Responsibilities

13.1 Clubs and Organisers:

- are responsible for assessing whether activity can safely proceed and for putting appropriate controls in place.
- Should identify who is responsible for checking forecasts and alerts.
- Should identify who is responsible for completing the risk assessment.

- should identify who is responsible for communicating with participants and parents or carers.
- should identify who is responsible for making decisions to adapt, delay, postpone or cancel activity.
- should identify who is responsible for ensuring first aid and emergency arrangements are in place.
- should identify who is responsible for recording and reviewing any heat-related incidents.

13.2 Coaches and Team Managers:

- should adapt sessions where needed.
- should monitor participants.
- should build in appropriate rest and drinks breaks.
- should stop activity where someone becomes unwell.
- should escalate concerns to the club or organiser.

13.3 Officials:

- should support a welfare-led approach.
- should raise concerns where conditions appear unsafe.

13.4 Participants, Parents and Carers:

- should follow club guidance.
- should arrive prepared for the conditions.
- should bring sufficient water.
- should use sunscreen and suitable clothing.
- should tell someone immediately if they feel unwell.
- should avoid taking part if they feel unsafe or unwell.

14 Incident Reporting

- 14.1 Any heat-related incident requiring first aid, medical attention or emergency support should be recorded through the club's normal incident reporting process.
- 14.2 Where relevant, clubs should also report incidents through EH injury or incident reporting routes.
- 14.3 Clubs should review any heat-related incident and consider whether future planning, communication or controls need to be improved.

15 Summary

- 15.1 Extreme heat should be treated as a foreseeable welfare and safety risk.
- 15.2 EH recommends that clubs and organisers plan, monitor conditions, communicate clearly and make decisions based on the welfare of all involved.
- 15.3 Where activity cannot be delivered safely, it should be adapted, delayed, postponed or cancelled.
- 15.4 If in doubt, do not proceed.



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