# Extreme Weather Guidance

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Revised date | | Adopted | 1/4/26 |
| Reviewed by | Safeguarding | Review date | July 27 |

## Contents


1. Overview
2. Extreme Heat
3. Extreme Cold
4. Heavy rain and Flooding
5. High Winds
6. Thunder storms

# Overview

The increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather in England has seen incidents of heatwaves, heavy rainfall, storms and flooding having a major impact on the health and well-being of the population. Extreme weather can affect not just our buildings and infrastructure but the activities we participate in.

It is important for those hosting, organising, participating in, and spectating outdoor sports events give due consideration to the risks associated with extreme weather.

This guidance has been produced to assist venue operators and the organisers of netball in the creation and management of their risk management procedures. Common sense should apply to ensure the safety of players, volunteers and staff.

All netball organisers should include the following extreme weather scenarios within their Risk Assessments. Checklist here: England Netball | Risk Management

- Extreme heat
- Extreme cold
- Heavy rain or flooding
- High winds
- Thunderstorms

**Organiser Top Tips**

- Use this guidance to **put together mitigation measures with all relevant parties** (i.e. venue operators, activity organisers, workforce)
- **Be Prepared** -In the days before the event/activity keep an eye on the weather forecasts at the specific location of the activity or event with the Met Office.
- **Check the conditions at the venue one hour before the event/activity**. If there is a chance the weather could cause you to cancel the event, put your participants on standby.
- **Provide pre-event information** so participants can be prepared.
- Where you feel that it's necessary to cancel or postpone, **make timely decisions to avoid unnecessary or unsafe journeys**.
- We recognise venues have differing policies on cancellations and refunds but safety of players (particularly children or adults at risk) should take precedence.

**Additional Sources**

Event management - meteorological services - Met Office

# Extreme Heat

**Context**

Guidelines for outdoor netball events in England during a period of extreme heat.

It is crucial to prioritise the well-being of all participants during periods of extreme heat. By taking proactive measures, providing necessary resources, and promoting a heat-safe environment, you can help ensure a safer outdoor netball event during hot weather conditions.

**Organisers Top Tips**

1. **Stay informed** about temperature levels and any relevant extreme heat warnings and recommendations. Keep track of the forecasts and heat advisories issued by local authorities.

2. **Schedule games strategically to avoid the hottest parts of the day**. If possible, plan matches during cooler times, such as early morning or late afternoon. Consider increasing breaks to allow for water intake and toilet breaks.

3. **Modify gameplay** if necessary: Assess the conditions and consider modifying gameplay rules or formats to account for extreme heat. Allow additional substitutions or more frequent breaks to help manage heat stress. Adjust game durations or reduce the intensity of physical contact if appropriate. Recommendation to modify game play Where the Heat Stress Index meets or exceeds 34.0°C (93.2°F)

4. **Emphasize the importance of staying hydrated** to all participants, including players, officials, and spectators. Encourage frequent water breaks and provide access to cool drinking water throughout the event. Remind individuals to drink water before, during, and after physical activity.

5. Ensure there is **shade available for participants** to get out of the sun especially between 11am and 3pm. Utilize gazebos, umbrellas, or other portable structures to create shaded spaces. Encourage individuals to take breaks in shaded areas during rest periods.

6. **Educate about heat-related illnesses**: Raise awareness about the signs and symptoms of heat-related illnesses, such as heat exhaustion and heatstroke. Encourage participants to be mindful of these symptoms, to advise of any previous episodes of heat illness or any current viral infection, and to seek medical assistance if needed. Train staff or volunteers on how to respond to heat-related emergencies.

*Any player demonstrating signs or symptoms of heat stress should be removed IMMEDIATELY from training or playing.*

7. **Promote the use of cooling measures during breaks**, such as cold towels, misting fans, or cooling sprays. These can help lower body temperature and provide temporary relief from the heat.

8. **Reinforce key messages for the duration** – stay hydrated, take time in the shade, apply sunscreen.

9. **Consider rescheduling or postponing**: In extreme cases where the heat poses significant risks to participants' health and safety, it may be necessary to reschedule or postpone the event to a cooler day or time. Recommendation to suspend play where the Heat Stress Index meets or exceeds 40.1°C (104.2°F).

**Equipment Considerations**

If relevant, competition rules or umpire decisions may affect this but participants should be reminded and prepared to bring:

- **Sunhats** that protect both ears and neck.
- **Cover up clothing**- long sleeve and full-length bottoms. Recommend lightweight, breathable clothing that allows for maximum air circulation. Light-coloured clothing can also help reflect sunlight and reduce heat absorption.
- **Sunscreen**- Participants should be **encouraged to bring their own sunscreen** to ensure they bring something appropriate for their circumstances or any allergies. Organisers should also consider providing sunscreen for anyone who failed to bring their own but must be aware of possible allergies. Use factor 30 sunscreen as a minimum
- **Sunglasses** – Eye protection from UV. If a player/coach/official has to wear glasses for medical reasons then she/he is fully insured from an EN point of view, but the glasses are not insured.
- **Water bottles**- participants should be encouraged in the pre-event information to bring their own. **drinking water should be available throughout the event or activity.

**Additional Sources**

Heat Illness (heat exhaustion and heatstroke) Heat exhaustion and heatstroke - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

Dehydration: https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/dehydration/

Outdoor Kids Sun Safety Code – Melanoma Fund Heatwave: looking after yourself and others during hot weather

NHS Beat the heat: Staying safe in hot weather – Public Health England

Further information and resources related to this topic are available by searching for 'events' on the CPSU website, www.thecpsu.org.uk

Humidity and Air Temperature for your event can be found by searching on a Postcode on BBC Weather or Met Office websites or app. There is an online calculator to calculate the heat stress index.

# Extreme Cold

**Context**

Guidelines for outdoor netball events in England during a period of extreme cold.

The health and safety of all participants should be the primary concern during periods of extreme cold. By taking appropriate measures, providing warmth and shelter, and promoting proper attire, you can help ensure a safer outdoor netball event during extreme cold weather conditions.

**Organisers Top Tips**

1. **Monitor weather conditions**: Stay updated with weather forecasts and cold weather advisories issued by local authorities. Keep an eye on temperature levels and any warnings or recommendations related to extreme cold. Check your venue's policy on gritting and seek advice in relation to when this is done.

2. **Provide warm-up areas**: Set up designated warm-up areas where players can prepare before the game. These areas should be sheltered from wind and equipped with heating devices if possible. Encourage individuals to engage in light physical activity or stretching to warm up their bodies.

3. **Inspect the playing area**: Before the event, assess the playing area **(**including all access pathways/car park) used by participants for potential hazards caused by cold weather, such as icy patches or slippery surfaces. If it isn't possible to remove snow, ice, or debris to ensure a safe playing environment, it is important for play to be postponed.

4. **Stay hydrated**: While it may not be as obvious as in hot weather, staying hydrated is still important during cold weather. Encourage participants to drink water or warm beverages before, during, and after the game to maintain hydration.

5. **Take breaks and warm-up intervals**: Allow for regular breaks during the game to give players a chance to warm up and rest. These breaks can help prevent overexposure to cold temperatures and reduce the risk of cold-related injuries. Consider increasing the duration of breaks in extreme cold conditions.

6. **Provide shelter and warmth:** Set up heated shelters or designated warm areas where players and spectators can seek refuge during breaks or when not actively participating. Provide access to hot beverages, blankets, or hand warmers to help individuals stay warm.

7. **Monitor for signs of cold-related injuries**: Educate participants about the signs and symptoms of cold-related injuries, such as frostbite and hypothermia. Encourage individuals to notify officials if they experience any concerning symptoms or discomfort. Have a plan in place to address any cold-related emergencies.

8. **Be prepared to reschedule or modify**: In cases of severe cold or extreme weather conditions, be prepared to reschedule or adjust the event as necessary to prioritize the safety and well-being of all participants.

Consideration for cancelling events should be given when Wind-Chill Temperatures are severely cold. Based on the Wind-Chill Temperature Index, it is recommended that events be postponed, or suspended if ongoing, when air temperature falls below -15°C (5°F), regardless of wind speed or rain.

**Equipment Considerations**

Participants should be reminded and prepared to bring/wear:

- **Dress appropriately:** Ensure that all participants, including players, officials, and spectators, are dressed warmly for the conditions. Layer clothing to provide insulation and trap heat and use moisture-wicking materials to keep dry.
- **Gloves:** During periods of extreme cold, gloves may be worn. Gloves should be plain, soft leather or micro fibre (e.g. Neoprene) which are manufactured without seams (or with internally sewn seams) and have no abrasive materials including but not limited to zippers, Velcro, metallic or plastic fasteners or rubberized embellishments used to improve grip. Umpires are reminded that they still need to be satisfied that any gloves worn do not present an obvious hazard to other players.
- **Appropriate footwear:** Recommend participants wear appropriate footwear for cold weather conditions. Insulated or waterproof shoes with good traction can help prevent slips and falls on outdoor surfaces.
- **Water bottles**: participants should be encouraged in the pre-event information to bring their own. **drinking water should be available throughout the event or activity.
- **Hot drinks:** participants can be encouraged to bring their own hot drink in the pre-event information to help with remaining hydrated and warm.

**Additional Sources**

Cold related injuries such as frostbite and Hypothermia – shivering, pale, blue lips, slurred speech, slow breathing, tired, confused

Link: https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/frostbite/

Further information and resources related to this topic are available by searching for ‘events’ on the CPSU website, Safer sport events/CPSU.

# Heavy rain or flooding

**Context**

Guidelines for outdoor netball events in England during a period of heavy rain or flooding.

It is crucial to prioritise safety above all else when dealing with heavy rain or flooding. By staying informed, communicating effectively, and taking appropriate measures, you can help ensure the well-being of everyone involved.

**Organisers Top Tips**

1. **Safety first**: The safety of all participants should be the top priority during a period of flooding. Assess the situation carefully and make decisions with safety in mind. Consider wider travel routes to the venue, as well as the venue itself. In order to assess risk – 1) Look at the hazards 2. Decide who might be harmed and how 3. Evaluate the risks and decide whether the existing control measures are adequate or whether more should be done

2. **Monitor flood alerts**: Stay updated with local weather reports, flood alerts, and instructions from relevant authorities. Keep an eye on official websites, local news, or weather apps to receive accurate and timely information about the flood conditions in your area.

3. **Assess the playing area**: Evaluate the condition of the playing area before the event. If the area is flooded or there is a risk of fast-moving water, it is best to avoid playing on the affected grounds.

4. **Relocate or reschedule**: If flooding is present or imminent, consider relocating the game to an alternate, safer location or reschedule the event for a later date when the floodwaters have receded.

5. **Communicate with participants**: Inform all players, officials, and spectators about the situation and any changes to the event. Provide clear instructions on what actions to take, such as relocation or rescheduling, and ensure everyone is aware of the potential risks associated with playing during a flood.

6. **Address safety hazards:** If the decision is made to proceed with the event despite flooding, take necessary precautions to address safety hazards. This may include removing debris, securing loose items, marking areas of standing water, and ensuring proper lighting to enhance visibility.

7. **Consider modified gameplay:** Assess the playing conditions and adjust the game rules or format as needed to accommodate the circumstances. This could involve playing on a modified or smaller area, using alternative footwear, or modifying gameplay rules to ensure safety and fairness.

8. **Stay vigilant**: Continuously monitor the flood conditions during the event. If the situation deteriorates or if there are any signs of increased risk, be prepared to suspend or cancel the game promptly to ensure the safety of all participants.

9. **Use common sense:** Trust your judgment and use common sense when deciding whether to proceed with or postpone the game.

**Equipment Considerations**

Participants should be reminded and prepared to bring/wear:

- **Dress appropriately:** Ensure that all participants, including players, officials, and spectators, are dressed for the conditions. Layer clothing to provide insulation and trap heat and use moisture-wicking materials to keep dry.
- **Appropriate footwear:** Recommend participants wear appropriate footwear for wet weather conditions. Insulated or waterproof shoes with good traction can help prevent slips and falls on outdoor surfaces.
- **Weather protection for bags and layers,** such as a recyclable bag to keep personal clothing dry.

# High Winds

**Context**

Guidelines for outdoor netball events in England during a period of high winds.

Remember, the safety of all participants is of utmost importance. Monitoring wind conditions, securing equipment, and communicating effectively will help ensure a safer outdoor netball event for all.

**Organisers Top Tips**

1. **Assess wind conditions**: Before the event, monitor weather forecasts to stay informed about the expected wind conditions. Be aware of any weather advisories or warnings related to high winds in your area.

2. **Inspect the playing area**: Before the game begins, conduct a thorough inspection of the playing area and surrounding environment. Check for any potential hazards such as loose objects, unstable structures, or trees with overhanging branches that could pose a risk in high winds.

3. **Secure equipment and structures**: Ensure that all netball equipment, including goal posts, nets, and any portable structures, are properly secured. Anchor or weight down items that may be susceptible to movement or tipping over due to strong gusts of wind.

4. **Communicate with participants**: Provide clear instructions to all players, officials, and spectators about the potential risks associated with high winds. Encourage everyone to stay alert and report any concerns or hazards promptly.

5. **Adjust gameplay if necessary**: Depending on the severity of the wind, consider modifying certain aspects of the game to enhance safety. This could include adjusting shooting distances, enforcing stricter rules regarding contact and stability, or allowing additional substitutions to minimize fatigue and potential injuries.

6. **Watch for flying debris**: Keep a watchful eye for any flying debris that may be carried by strong winds. In case of any loose objects or debris being blown onto the playing area, pause the game and ensure that it's promptly removed to prevent injuries.

7. **Use common sense:** Trust your judgment and use common sense when deciding whether to proceed with or postpone the game. If the wind speeds become dangerously high, it's advisable to prioritize safety and consider rescheduling the event.

**Equipment Considerations**

If the weather is not bad enough to cancel play, it would be sensible to consider windproof clothing for players, umpires and volunteers, communicating with parents/carers in advance.

# Thunder storms

**Context**

Guidelines for outdoor netball events in England during a thunderstorm.

It is essential to prioritise the safety and well-being of everyone involved. When thunderstorms occur, taking necessary precautions and following safety guidelines will help minimize the risk of lightning-related incidents.

**Organisers Top Tips**

1. **Prioritise safety**: The safety of players, officials, and spectators should be the top priority during a thunderstorm. It's crucial to take necessary precautions to minimise the risk of lightning strikes.

2. **Monitor weather updates:** Stay informed about weather conditions by using reliable sources such as weather apps, local weather services, or radio broadcasts. Be proactive in tracking thunderstorm warnings or advisories in your area.

3**. Establish an evacuation plan:** Develop a clear plan for evacuating the playing area and seek shelter in case of a thunderstorm. Identify safe locations nearby, such as buildings or vehicles, that can provide adequate protection from lightning.

4. **Lightning detection system:** Consider investing in a lightning detection system, which can provide real-time information about lightning activity in the vicinity. Such systems can assist in making informed decisions regarding suspending or resuming the game.

5. **Lightning delay protocol**: Establish a lightning delay protocol that outlines the steps to be followed when a thunderstorm is imminent. This may include sounding a siren, notifying participants, and guiding them to designated safe areas until the storm passes.

6. **MET office advice:** Seek shelter in substantial buildings, fully enclosed vehicles, or designated lightning-safe structures. Do not under any circumstances permit anyone to shelter under trees. During a thunderstorm, If outside avoid water and find a low-lying open place that is a safe distance from trees, poles or metal objects.

- Be aware of metal objects that can conduct or attract lightning, including umbrellas, netball posts motorbikes, bicycles, wheelchairs, mobility scooters, pushchairs, wire fencing and rails.
- If you are in a tent, try to stay away from the metal poles.
- If you find yourself in an exposed location it may be advisable to squat close to the ground, with hands on knees and with head tucked between them. Try to touch as little of the ground with your body as possible, do not lie down on the ground.
- If you feel your hair stand on end, drop to the above position immediately

7. **Wait for the all-clear:** After the thunderstorm has passed, it's crucial to wait for a reasonable period before resuming the game. A general rule of thumb is to wait at least 30 minutes after the last observed lightning or thunder before continuing any outdoor activities.

**Equipment Considerations**

It is safer to find shelter indoors or away from the court than to remove the net posts

**Additional Sources**

Link: Stay safe in thunder and lightning - Met Office