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TO:	**ALL MATCH OFFICIALS**
FROM:	**FFV Referees Department**
DATE:	**November 25th 2009**
SUBJECT:	**Extreme Weather Policy**

Background

Extreme weather may be defined as weather that threatens the immediate or long-term safety of individuals, as a result of rain, hail, lightening, wind chill or heat. The risk is determined in conjunction with Sport Management Australia's Guidelines, as well as the Bureau of Meteorology's forecast conditions.

Weather Condition	Extreme weather determinant
Ambient temperature	> 36 degrees Celsius
Wet bulb globe temperature (shade)	> 30
Apparent temperature (wind chill)	< 2 degrees Celsius
Wind Speed	> 40km per hour
Rainfall	> 80mm within 24 hours

Wind may create additional hazards in regard to trees, branches or other materials becoming projectiles. Rain also needs to be considered in relation its impact on the safety of the ground surface.

Heat

The 'Extreme Weather Conditions' section of the Rules of Competition state:

- FFV and/or the appointed Referee may postpone, delay or abandon any fixture due to extreme weather conditions including, but not limited to, excessive heat or humidity, or poor weather that may endanger participants.
- In such circumstances, the Referee must set out his or her reasons in writing to FFV within 48 hours of the decision to postpone, delay or abandon the fixture.
- If the temperature is 32ºC or above, water bottles should be made available and placed along the sidelines by team officials to enable any player to take a drink during the course of the game. In such circumstances, the match referee may at his or her discretion, also allow a two (2) minute break for players during the course of each half.
- NOTE: In the event that water bottles are made available along the sidelines, players should *not* leave the field of play to take the drink bottles *nor* should bottles be thrown on or off the field of play. No time will be added for additional breaks taken and breaks will be taken at a suitable break in play, as determined by the referee.

Further to the guidelines provided in the Rules of Competition, Sport Medicine Australia recommends that should the ambient temperature (hot/dry conditions) reach 36ºC or above a fixture should be postponed to a cooler part of the day or to a later date.

If the forecast temperature one (1) day prior to a fixture is for 36ºC or above, postponement of fixtures should be considered as a real possibility.

Referees should use the Bureau of Meteorology website to ascertain accurate temperature readings. Regular updates can be accessed via www.bom.gov.au or the Victorian BOM Office General Enquiries number (03) 9669 4000.

In addition to the above, it is advisable that all participants should ensure that they;

a) remain well hydrated
b) utilise interchange benches (where applicable) frequently
c) wear sunscreen and a hat/cap (when not on the field)
d) seek shade during breaks where available
e) advise referees, coaches and/or team officials if experiencing any distress resulting from the temperature

Sport Medicine Australia publishes some excellent tips for exercising in hot conditions. Please refer to the following link for details.
http://sma.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2009/05/beat-the-heat.pdf

Hail

All hailstorms present some risk to players in an open playing field, and the size and intensity of the storm can change dramatically in a short period of time.

All play should be suspended during hail storms so that players and officials can seek suitable shelter.

Referees should suspend play, noting where the ball was for future restart (drop ball). It is important to also be aware of any significant temperature drop, rain fall and increased wind that may be associated with the hail conditions.

Play should be restarted after the hail has stopped falling, with particular attention being given to the amount of ice on the playing surface (size & thickness of layer). In some cases it may be unsafe to resume play immediately due to an ice covered surface. Deferral of the restart for 15 minutes to allow melting (or manual clearing in parts) should be considered in extreme circumstances. Line markings may also need to be checked.

Lightning

- Lightning is the visible part of an electrical discharge. Thunder is the resulting sound from the rapid expansion of the air after this electrical discharge. Sound follows light at 0.34 km/sec. Check the forecast and watch the sky. Darkening skies, flashes of lightning, or increasing wind may indicate an approaching storm.

Lightning safety tips:

- **Use the 30/30 Lightning Rule** (If the time between lightning flash and the thunder sound is less than 30 SECONDS then play should be suspended, and not resumed until 30 MINUTES after the last thunder) [30 seconds relates to 10 kilometers away].

- Find safe shelter. Sturdy buildings are the safest place to be during lightning storms. Avoid sheds, picnic shelters, metal coaching boxes & goal posts. Staying in a car with windows closed also offers some protection.

NOTE: Thunder is not usually heard 24-32 kilometres from the lightning strike.

Chill

Extreme weather can produce two chill risks. The absolute air temperate and the wind chill factor. Of these wind chill in winter sports is the more significant risk.

Apparent Temperature (**AT**) is an adjustment to the actual air (ambient) temperature based on the perceived effect of the extra elements such as humidity and wind. **AT** is valid over a wide range of temperature, and it includes the chilling effect of the wind at lower temperatures.

Minus 2 degrees Celsius (AT) is the point where play should be suspended for wind chill factor.

When using the **AT** as a wind chill indicator, the model assumes an appropriately dressed adult for those conditions. If clothing were to get wet, the cooling effect would be greater than that predicted by the model, and the chance of hypothermia would be greater than indicated by the **AT**. In wet, windy conditions, someone wearing inadequate clothing can become hypothermic in quite mild temperatures. The risk increases for children also.

The link below provides a reference to AT values at a range of measuring points.

http://www.bom.gov.au/products/IDV65079.shtml

While this aspect is difficult to measure at a given location, the link does provide some comparison between actual temperature and Apparent Temperature.