



# AGILITY DOG ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA LTD

ABN 83 070 415 404

## EXTREME WEATHER POLICY

### **Introduction:**

The Board of Directors has introduced this Policy to reduce the risk of extreme weather (lightning, heat etc) related injuries to competitors, dogs, judges and other officials and members of the public involved in ADAA events or activities. The Policy also contains a number of guidelines to help Judges and other officials in recognising and managing extreme weather.

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this Policy is to provide guidelines for managing various weather conditions that may arise at competitions and events. This involves both preplanning and emergency protocols.

### **Policy Statement:**

The Board of Directors is committed to safe and enjoyable events for all participants (including dogs) and spectators. This includes minimising risk due to adverse or extreme weather conditions.

### **Definitions:**

#### **Responsibilities:**

Board of Directors - Ensure that policies and procedures reflect current recommendations for reducing and managing risks associated with weather conditions.

Officiating Judge(s) - Be aware of the prevailing weather conditions and how they may affect the handlers, their dogs and those officiating at the event and apply this Extreme Weather Policy at Competitions, when appropriate. Be flexible with course design, ring layout, obstacles etc to minimise the impact of the conditions (eg muddy ground) on handlers and their dogs including, where required, obtaining assistance from a more experienced Judge.

Club officials - Be aware of predicted and prevailing weather conditions in terms of pre-planning (season, date, time etc), risk assessment and competition management (protocols for heat, lightning, cancellation etc). Be prepared to implement this policy promptly when indicated.

Members attending an ADAA competition/event - Be aware of the prevailing weather conditions and of this policy. Alert the competition/event manager of any safety concerns or if thunder and lightning suspension criteria have been met (see 30-30 rule).

### **Procedure:**

#### **9. Risk Assessment**

**9.1** All ADAA events must be assessed for risk during the planning stages. Assessment includes consideration of risk associated with the venue, the activities and the participants. Included in this assessment must be the likely prevailing weather conditions and the likelihood of inclement weather. If the event is conducted during a season of likely storm activity or high heat or sun, these weather conditions must be factored into the planning and risk management for the event.

## **10. Heat and Sun**

### **10.1 Event scheduling**

10.1.1 Wherever possible, events are to be scheduled to avoid hot conditions. Events scheduled during summer should be conducted in the early morning and/or late afternoon and evening, subject to the type of event, location and venue.

### **10.2 Sun protection**

10.2.1 It is recommended that all participants and officials in the sun wear hats and sunscreen (minimum SPF 30+) at all times.

10.2.2 Sunscreen must be available for use by Officiating Judges and Stewards who are in the sun for more extended periods and should be re-applied at a minimum of every 2 hours.

10.2.3 It should be noted that sunscreen does not offer complete protection against the sun and should always be used in conjunction with other protective measures.

10.2.4 Shade must be provided for the ring stewards.

10.2.5 A ready supply of drinking water must be available to all Officiating Judges and Stewards.

10.2.6 Participants and spectators are encouraged to stay in naturally shaded areas when they are not actively required to be in the direct sun.

10.2.7 Participants and officials are also encouraged to use other artificial means of shade such as umbrellas and cabanas and other on-field structures during waiting times etc.

### **10.3 Care of dogs in the heat and sun**

10.3.1 Comfort and safety of dogs is paramount at all times.

10.3.2 Dogs should, preferably, be kept in naturally shaded areas.

10.3.3 When natural shade is not readily available, safe artificial shade must be provided.

10.3.4 Dogs should only be in on-field for as short a time as possible, in the marshalling area prior to their run and during their run, and then should be taken back to a shaded area immediately after the run.

10.3.5 All dogs must have ready access to fresh cool water.

10.3.6 Clubs are also encouraged to provide shaded wading pools and/or spray hoses for cooling dogs.

10.3.7 The use of cool mats, coats, crate fans etc is at the discretion of the owner.

## **11. Rain**

### **11.1 Dealing with Rain**

11.1.1 If it is raining heavily, and there are safety concerns, the competition/event may be discontinued for a period of up to half an hour and then conditions reassessed to determine whether the competition/event should resume or be cancelled.

11.1.2 Safety concerns would include risk of slipping by handlers, hazards on the contact equipment for dogs, visibility issues in very heavy rain etc.

11.1.3 If, in the opinion of the Officiating Judge/event manager, the rain fall is not a significant safety factor, then the competition/event may continue during the rain period.

11.1.4 It is important that the cloths on the collapsible tunnels be removed in rainy conditions to avoid them becoming weighted down with rain water and difficult to negotiate.

11.1.5 Officiating Judges should be prepared to modify courses, change ring position, and make other changes to accommodate the conditions including where required, obtain assistance from a more experienced Judge.

## **12. Hail Storms**

12.1 In Australia, hail storms can be sudden and severe but are usually very short in duration. If a hail storm occurs during a competition/event, all activities should cease and all participants should seek suitable protective cover.

## **13. Lightning**

### **13.1 Lightning facts**

13.1.1 Australian statistics show that approximately 25% of people killed by lightning are playing sport. When thunderstorms threaten, Judges (and other Officials) must not let the desire to start a competition or event hinder their judgment when the safety of competition, dogs, officials and spectators is in jeopardy.

13.1.2 All thunderstorms produce lightning and are dangerous.

13.1.3 Lightning often strikes outside the area of heavy rain.

13.1.4 Any time thunder is heard, the thunderstorm is close enough to pose an immediate threat to the location.

13.1.5 When thunderstorms are in the area but not overhead, the lightning threat can still exist even if it is sunny overhead and not raining or when clear sky is visible.

- 13.1.6 Many lightning casualties occur before the thunderstorm rains have moved into the area; this is often due to people not seeking shelter soon enough.
- 13.1.7 Many casualties also occur after the rain dissipates; this can be due to people being in too much of a hurry to go back outside to resume activities.

### **13.2 Safe structures and locations**

- 13.2.1 No place is absolutely safe from a lightning threat however some places are safer than others.
- 13.2.2 Safe structures:
  - 13.2.2.1 The primary choice for a safe structure is a large, fully enclosed building.
  - 13.2.2.2 If a building is not available, a fully enclosed vehicle with a metal roof and the windows completely closed is a reasonable alternative.

### **13.3 Unsafe locations and situations**

- 13.3.1 An open field.
- 13.3.2 Close vicinity to the tallest structure in the area eg tree(s), light pole(s).
- 13.3.3 Small structures such as picnic shelters, tents, equipment sheds.
- 13.3.4 Use of indoor phones.
- 13.3.5 Use of electrical appliances.
- 13.3.6 Umbrellas or any object that increases a person's height.

### **13.4 Criteria for suspension and resumption of activities**

- 13.4.1 The sound of thunder should serve as an immediate warning of lightning danger. Generally speaking if an individual can see lightning and/or hear thunder he/she is already at risk.

### **13.5 The 30-30 Rule**

- 13.5.1 This is a 2 part rule, with one rule to suspend activities and another rule to resume activities.
- 13.5.2 **Suspend All Activities**
  - 13.5.2.1 When the flash-to-bang interval, (ie lightning is seen and then thunder is heard) approaches 30 seconds, this interval means that the storm is approximately 10km away and everyone should be inside a safe shelter.
  - 13.5.2.2 If a member observes that the 30 second Suspension rule is applicable they must immediately inform the Competition Manager or Club Official.
  - 13.5.2.3 The Competition Manager, or Club Official, is to advise all Officiating Judges if the 30 second Suspension rule applies and Judges must then cease all ring activities and members should be advised to take appropriate cover.
- 13.5.3 **Resume Activities**
  - 13.5.3.1 Once the 30 second Suspension rule has been applied, Judges must wait at least 30 minutes after the last sound of thunder or observation of lightning and ensure conditions are safe before leaving shelter to resume activities. The Officiating Judges and Competition Manager, or Club Official, must concur that the 30 minute Resumption rule is applicable prior to resuming competition activities and advising members to leave shelter.
  - 13.5.3.2 Each time lightning is observed or thunder is heard following application of the 30 second Suspension rule, the 30-minute clock should be restarted.

#### **Follow the criteria for suspension and resumption of activities without exception**

### **13.6 First aid**

- 13.6.1 Lightning victims do not carry an electrical charge and are safe to handle and need immediate medical attention. Cardiac arrest is the immediate cause of death in lightning fatalities. Some deaths can be prevented if the victim receives the proper first aid:
  - 13.6.1.1 Call an ambulance at once;
  - 13.6.1.2 Check the victim's pulse and breathing, begin CPR if necessary; and
  - 13.6.1.3 If possible, move the victim to a safer place. Be aware that the thunderstorm may still be dangerous. Don't let the rescuers become victims.

## **14. High wind**

### **14.1 Dealing with High Wind**

High wind has impact both on-field and off-field and to both competitors and officials

- 14.1.1 Tents and shade cabanas etc:
  - 14.1.1.1 Should be appropriately erected and tethered;
  - 14.1.1.2 Should be lowered or dismantled in high wind.

#### 14.1.2 Equipment safety

- 14.1.2.1 Officiating Judges (competition) or instructors/officials (training camps, other events) should be mindful that equipment does not pose a danger to the Dog, Handler, Judge, and/or Instructor during wind gusts.
- 14.1.2.2 In particular, checks should be made on the cloths of collapsible tunnels and they should be removed if there is concern that gusts could cause twisting of the cloth.
- 14.1.2.3 Consideration also needs to be given for Dogs' safety when negotiating contact obstacles, particularly when there are cross winds or wind gusts.

#### 14.2 Decisions to suspend or cancel competitions or events due to high winds

- 14.2.1 Officiating Judges/officials should suspend judging/activities during severe wind gusts but may resume when conditions settle.
- 14.2.2 In severe and ongoing conditions, consideration needs to be given to:
  - 14.2.2.1 Making adjustments to course design to accommodate conditions;
  - 14.2.2.2 Replacing all Agility Tests and/or Games that include contact equipment with Jumping Tests or similarly restructuring activities at a training camp etc;
  - 14.2.2.3 Cancelling all Agility Tests and/or Games that include contact equipment or activities at a training camp etc that include contact equipment; and/or
  - 14.2.2.4 Cancelling all remaining events/activities.

### 15. Cancelled Competition/Event

#### 15.1 Travelling Home from a Cancelled Competition/Event

- 15.1.1 When a competition/event is cancelled due to extreme weather, the road conditions are likely to be hazardous. All competitors, officials, spectators etc need to be reminded to take due care, perhaps delaying the trip home until the worst of the weather has passed.

#### 15.2 Refund Entitlements

- 15.2.1 Cancellation and refund entitlements in the case of competition cancellation are in accordance with the ADAA Competition Cancellation Policy and ADAA Refund Policy respectively. For more details, please refer to those Policies.

#### Stakeholders to be consulted prior to policy change:

Board of Directors

#### Related documents:

ADAA Risk Management Policy POL-OHS-004  
ADAA Refund Policy POL-FIN-013  
ADAA Competition Cancellation Policy POL-CLU-020

#### References:

Makdissi M and Brukner P (2003). Recommendations for lightning protection in sport. *Medical Journal of Australia* 177: 35-7.  
Standards Association of Australia, Australian Standard 1768 Lightning Protection. Standards Australia, Ho mebus, NSW, Australia 2007.

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29 March 2008	Created	P Mead	18 July 2009
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