

VISAA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee Extreme Weather Guidelines

The Virginia Independent Schools Athletic Association (VISAA) Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) advises that practices and competitions should be modified when environmental conditions are extreme. The following guidelines have been created to ensure safe play during practices and games.

The Virginia Independent School Athletic Association (VISAA) Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) advises when thunder is heard or lightning is seen*, the leading edge of the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Suspend play for at least 30 minutes and vacate the outdoor activity to the previously designated safer location immediately. Once play has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or lightning is witnessed* prior to resuming play. Any subsequent thunder or lightning* after the beginning of the 30-minute count will reset the clock and another 30-minute count should begin. When independently validated lightning-detection devices or mobile phone apps are available, this technology could be used to assist in making the decision to suspend play if a lightning strike is noted to be within 10 miles of the event location. However, you should never depend on the reliability of these devices and, thus, hearing thunder or seeing lightning* should always take precedence over information from a mobile app or lightning-detection device. These guidelines provide a default policy to those responsible or sharing duties for making decisions concerning the suspension and restarting of practices and contests based on the presence of lightning or thunder based on the most recent guidelines provided by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) on February 14, 2021. The full guideline can be found [here](#).

The VISAA Heat Guidelines provides participation recommendations based on three assessment recommendations: WBGT, WBT, and Heat index. The Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) is the recommended method for assessing environmental conditions and should be used to determine the nature of any modifications. The WBGT takes into account ambient air temperature, relative humidity, and radiant heating from the sun and is utilized extensively in athletics and the US military to modify activity when conditions warrant. While WBGT is preferred, Heat Index can be utilized should WBGT be unavailable.

The VISAA Cold Weather Guidelines provide participation recommendations based on wind chill which is a combination of temperature (°F) and wind speed (MPH). The National Weather Service issues a Wind Chill Advisory when the wind chill could be life threatening if action is not taken. In Virginia a Wind Chill Advisory is issued when wind chills of -5°F to -19°F are expected east of the Blue Ridge Mountains, and when wind chills of -10°F to -24°F are expected along and west of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The National Weather Service issues a Wind Chill Warning when the wind chill is life threatening. In Virginia a Wind Chill Warning is issued when wind chills of -20°F or lower are expected east of the Blue Ridge Mountains, and when wind chills of -25°F or lower are expected along and west of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The VISAA SMAC has included guidelines below for practices and competition during environmental conditions that are extreme.

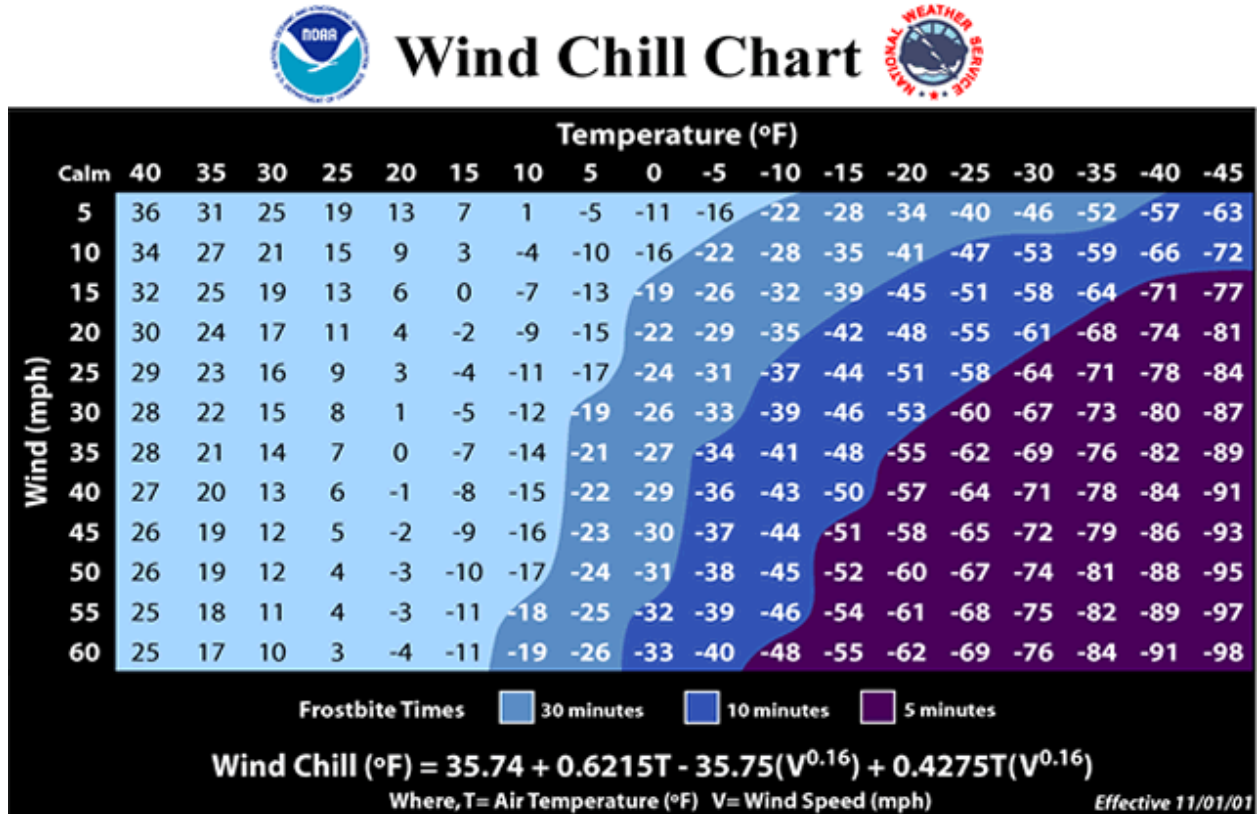
* – At night, under certain atmospheric conditions, lightning flashes may be seen from distant storms. In these cases, it may be safe to continue an event. If no thunder can be heard and the flashes are low on the horizon, the storm may not pose a threat. Independently verified lightning detection information would help eliminate any uncertainty

References:

1. Cappaert TA, Stone JA, Castellani JW, Krause BA, Smith D, Stephens BA. National Athletic Trainers' Association Position Statement: Cold Injuries. *Journal of Athletic Training*. 2008; 43(6):640-658
2. Casa, DJ, Csillan D. Preseason Heat-Acclimatization Guidelines for Secondary School Athletics. *J Athl Train*. 2009;44(3):332-333.
3. Casa, DJ, DeMartini JK, Bergeron MF, et al. National Athletic Trainers' Association Position Statement: Exertional Heat Illness. *J Athl Train*. 2015;50(9):986-1000.
4. Casa, DJ, Almquist, JL, Anderson, SA, et al. The Inter-Association Task Force for Preventing Sudden Death in Secondary School Athletics Programs: Best-Practices Recommendations. *J Athl Train*. 2013;48(4):546-553.
5. Casa, DJ, Armstrong, LE, Hillman, SK, et al. National Athletic Trainers' Association Position Statement: Fluid Replacement for Athletes. *J Athl Train*. 2000;35(2):212-224.
6. Guideline 2B: Cold Stress and Cold Exposure. In: Parsons JT. 2014-2015 NCAA Sports Medicine Handbook. 25th Edition. Indianapolis, IN. National Collegiate Athletic Association; 2014: 35-38. <http://www.ncaa.org/sport-science-institute/2014-15-ncaa-sports-medicine-handbook>. Accessed December 1, 2018.
7. Funkhouser BA, Bussey B. Sports Safety Guidelines: Cold Weather. Washington County Public Schools Athletic Training. <https://www.quia.com/files/quia/users/funkhoba/Sports-SafetyGuidelines-Cold-Weather.pdf>. Accessed November 28, 2018.
8. NFHS: GUIDELINES ON HANDLING PRACTICES AND CONTESTS DURING LIGHTNING OR THUNDER DISTURBANCES February 2021 Available here: <https://www.nfhs.org/sports-resource-content/nfhs-sports-medicine-position-statements-and-guidelines/>
9. Virginia High School League. VHSL Heat Guidelines. 2017, available from: https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B_7KGbWzA0LxMFdGRWoxUmNjZUU/view?resourcekey=0-unxLke13tenQVR2u8V9hhg
10. Virginia High School League. VHSL Cold Weather Guidelines. 2017, available from: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1DFQj52HdLxzs3raGblr5aPd-crN1_2gn/view

11. Watch/Warning Advisory Definitions. National Weather Service. <https://www.weather.gov/lwx/WarningsDefined#Wind%20Chill%20Warning>. Accessed December 6, 2018.
12. Wind Chill Chart. National Weather Service. <https://www.weather.gov/safety/cold-wind-chillchart>. Accessed December 18, 2018.

Virginia Independent Schools Athletic Association Cold Weather Guidelines



Guidelines for Practice and Competition

The following guidelines can be used in making practice and competition decision.

Wind Chill Temperature	Recommendations
31°F and above	Normal Practice
30°F and below	Be aware of potential for cold injury and notify appropriate personnel of the potential.
25°F and below	Provide additional protective clothing, cover as much exposed skin as practice and provide opportunities and facilities for rewarming.
15°F and below	Consider modifying activity to limit exposure or to allow more frequent chances to rewarm
0°F and below	Consider terminating or rescheduling activity.

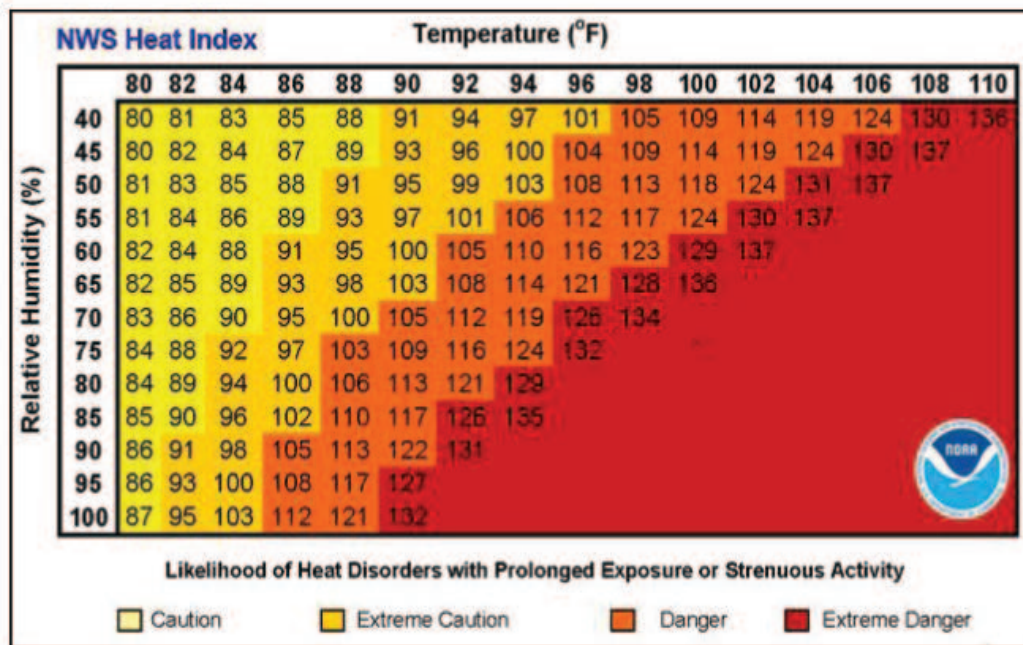
When wind chill temperature is at 30°F or below rules/regulations regarding undergarments should be waived.

Virginia Independent Schools Athletic Association Heat Guidelines

**WET BULB TEMPERATURE (WBT) and WET BULB GLOBE TEMPERATURE (WBGT)
PARTICIPATION RECOMMENDATIONS**

Level	WBT	WBGT	Duration	Fluid Consumption	Practices
1	<66°	<80°	3 hours maximum	Insist that adequate fluid be ingested	Full gear; minimum of 2 water breaks per hour
2	66.0°-74.9°	80.0°-82.4°	3 hours maximum	Insist that 4 – 6 oz fluid be ingested every 20 minutes	Full gear; minimum of 3 water breaks per hour
3	75.0°-76.9°	82.5°-84.9°	3 hours maximum	Insist that 6 – 8 oz fluid be ingested every 20 minutes	Remove helmets unless active in drill; monitor athletes, rest as needed.
4	77.0°-78.9°	85.0°-87.4°	3 hours maximum, every 45 minutes of work ≥ 15 minutes of rest each hour*	Insist that 8 – 10 oz fluid be ingested every 15 minutes	No equipment during non-contact drills; remove helmet unless active in drill, remove pads when teaching or non-contact portions of practice exceed 10 minutes in length
5	79.0°-80.9°	87.5°-89.9°	3 hours maximum every 45 minutes of work ≥ 20 minutes of rest each hour*	Insist that 8 – 10 oz fluid be ingested every 15 minutes.	Shirt and shorts only, no helmets or equipment; reduce intensity of activity, no equipment or helmets
6	81.0° +	90.0° +	NO OUTDOOR PRACTICES, SCRIMMAGES or COMPETITIONS	Re-hydrate 24 oz for every pound of body weight loss per day.	Practices conducted indoors must follow the Heat Policy

HEAT INDEX PARTICIPATION RECOMMENDATIONS



Heat Index	Recommendations
105° and up	No outdoor activities
95° to 104°	No equipment (helmets, shoulder pads, etc.) during activity
90° to 94°	Equipment removed as often as possible (during rest breaks, while on sideline, etc.). Careful monitoring for signs of heat illness.
Below 89°	Unrestricted access to water during all practices and competitions; breaks every 20 to 30 minutes.