



# Rowing SA

## Weather and Environmental Conditions Management Policy

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## INTRODUCTION

Rowing SA is committed to providing a safe and enjoyable environment for all clubs, schools, participants, volunteers, officials and spectators to engage in rowing and its associated activities.

Rowing SA has formulated the following Weather and Condition Management Recommendations to protect all members of the rowing community, including athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, and spectators, from the risks associated with adverse conditions. Rowing SA has also considered the needs of clubs and schools in managing the logistics of competitions, and the significant time commitment of officials and volunteers to facilitate competitions, in creating a framework of recommendations and processes should extreme adverse conditions be forecast in advance of a competition day.

These Management Recommendations and the Competition Day Policy will govern the Association's approach to adverse conditions at all Rowing SA events, including all training and events held by any Rowing SA representative team. However, ultimately the responsibility for assessing and managing the risks to athletes, coaches, officials, spectators, and volunteers associated with competition and training in adverse conditions rests with the individuals themselves, their schools, clubs, coaches, and parents for those who may be under the age of 18. Furthermore, compliance with these management recommendations and the identification and implementation of additional measures required to manage adverse conditions, also rests with the individual, their schools, clubs, coaches, and parents for those who may be under the age of 18.

The policy and management recommendations cover six conditions most likely to impact rowing in South Australia and create an increased risk to participants in the sport. They are as follows:

### 1. Heat

Rowing in South Australia is predominantly a summer sport and can therefore be subject to extreme heat in both training and competitions. High intensity exercise in a hot environment, with the associated fluid loss and elevation of body temperature, can lead to dehydration, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke (which can be fatal). In addition, high temperatures bring an associated risk of exposure to elevated UV Radiation which increases the risk of skin cancer.

### 2. Wind

High winds can create significant risks to rowers for several reasons. The wind itself impacts the boat and the rowers, making boat handling difficult, increasing fatigue and time taken to travel to the start line or complete a race, and creating a heightened risk of capsize or collision with other craft or obstacles on course. Strong winds create an associated risk of chop and waves on course, with some venues being especially vulnerable to this when the wind is blowing from a particular direction or against the flow of the waterway.

### 3. Thunderstorms

Lightning poses a significant risk to rowers due to the absence of shelter or infrastructure on the water to create a high point, the presence of conductive materials on boats, and the time it can take to get to a bank and find adequate shelter.

### 4. Visibility

Poor visibility on rowing venues creates a heightened risk of collision with other watercraft, obstacles in the water, banks, and bridges. Visibility issues caused by smoke or dust can also trigger asthma and other respiratory issues in some individuals.

### 5. Flow & Water Quality

The majority of rowing in South Australia takes place on relatively still or slow moving, stable bodies of water. However, significant rain events in the local area or in other parts of Australia can create high flows at some venues. This can have associated risks of debris being washed into waterways, water quality being depleted due to run-off, increase the difficulty of boat handling creating safety and collision issues on the course, and (where

the race is held against the flow) significantly increase the effort and time required to complete a race. On the other hand, the still conditions on some South Australian waterways can create water quality issues that require consideration and management (e.g. algal blooms).

## 6. Cold Weather and Cold-Water Exposure

Cold weather and cold-water conditions can create safety risks for athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers and spectators. Risks may increase when exposed to low air temperatures, cold water, rain, strong winds, wind chill, or prolonged time outdoors. Cold conditions may result in hypothermia, fatigue, reduced judgement and reaction times, impaired boat handling, and increased risk during rescue or water immersion incidents. Cold water immersion presents a heightened risk due to rapid heat loss and the potential for cold shock. Particular consideration should be given to junior and novice athletes, masters athletes, individuals with medical conditions, and participants who become wet or are exposed to the conditions for extended periods.

In the event of additional adverse conditions Rowing SA will communicate with all clubs and schools regarding the risks and management of those conditions, including modifications, postponements, and cancellations of competitions, events, or training.

The policy and management recommendations are split into three broad sections:

### **SECTION 1: Adverse Weather and Condition Management Recommendations for Training**

This section details **recommendations** for managing adverse weather and conditions in training for all athletes, coaches, clubs, and schools. However, it is expected that all clubs and schools have their own comprehensive policies in place for managing adverse weather and conditions, and that all athletes and coaches of that club or school are familiar with those policies.

### **SECTION 2: Adverse Weather and Condition Forecasts Prior to Competitions**

This section outlines the steps that will be taken by Rowing SA if adverse weather or conditions are predicted or forecast prior to a Rowing SA event that constitute a reasonable risk that a competition will not be able to continue as planned.

### **SECTION 3: Adverse Weather and Condition Management Policy On and During Competition Days**

This section contains the Rowing SA **policy** on adverse weather and conditions arising on a competition day, and the processes that will be enacted to protect all athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, and spectators present at a Rowing SA competition venue.

## **SECTION 1:**

### **ADVERSE WEATHER & CONDITION MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRAINING**

The following are **recommendations** for athletes, coaches, clubs, and schools for managing adverse weather and conditions in training. Rowing SA advises all clubs and schools to have and be familiar with their own comprehensive policies regarding all conditions and situations that could potentially arise during any training session at any time.

#### **1.1 Heat**

Athletes, coaches, clubs and schools should be aware that all individuals will manage heat and the effects of heat differently. This will depend on a variety of factors including but not limited to - fitness level, athletic ability, age, gender, predisposed and pre-existing medical conditions, and level of acclimatisation. Multiple days of hot weather and high overnight temperatures can also impact an individuals' ability to manage hot weather.

On days when heat is a concern athletes, coaches, schools and clubs are advised to consider avoiding excessive temperatures by training early in the morning or late in the evening, subject to peak heat and UV predictions for that day.

Appropriate sun protection and hydration measures should be implemented.

Where possible training should take place at suitable alternate venues, preferably inside (un-airconditioned indoor venues may not be suitable alternate venues).

Training activities should be modified in terms of duration and intensity and adequate breaks given for recovery and hydration.

Athletes, coaches, clubs and schools should have a method of measuring temperature and humidity at the training venue or utilise the observations of the nearest Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) observation centre.

In the absence of a club or school specific Hot Weather Policy, athletes, coaches, clubs and schools should utilise the Heat Index Table and recommendations as included in Section 3.1 of this document.

#### **1.2 Wind**

Athletes, coaches, clubs, and schools should consider alternate training venues or off-water activities when significant strong winds are forecast.

Athletes, coaches, clubs and schools should assess the strength, direction, and impacts of the wind, and the ability of the individual or individuals to manage the conditions prior to commencing training, and at regular intervals throughout the training.

Adequate or additional supervision of junior, inexperienced, or high-risk crews should be in place.

Athletes, coaches, and crews should be familiar with what to do if a capsize should occur.

If conditions worsen, or there are any concerns about the individual or individual's ability to manage the conditions, all boats should return to the bank and get off the water immediately.

### **1.3 Thunderstorms**

It is recommended outdoor training of any type should not take place in the vicinity of a thunderstorm. It is considered that a safe distance from a thunderstorm is a minimum of 10km.

Evidence suggests blue sky overhead is **not** a sufficient indication of safe distance from a thunderstorm or that a thunderstorm risk has passed.

Athletes, coaches, clubs, and schools should monitor available weather radars and lightning trackers in the event that a thunderstorm is forecast, or on days of significant cloud cover.

In the absence of access to such resources, the '30/30 Rule' should be followed:

- If the time between seeing a lightning flash and hearing a thunder clap is less than 30 seconds, the thunderstorm is within 10km (as sound travels at approximately 340m per second).
- Athletes, coaches, clubs, and schools should wait 30 minutes after the last sound of thunder is heard prior to resuming any outdoor activity, unless in the opinion of the coach, the conditions provide sufficient evidence that there is no further risk.
- If a thunderstorm develops or moves into the area, all outdoor activity should be stopped immediately, and suitable shelter should be found, preferably in the form of a solid building or totally enclosed car. Do not seek shelter under a tree (or group of trees), in the open, or in small open structures such as picnic shelters or marquees.
- On days of thunderstorm risk, consideration should be given to the location of appropriate shelter and the time required to reach appropriate shelter during a training session should the need arise. Training should be modified accordingly.

### **1.4 Visibility**

On water training should not take place if visibility is less than 1km at a minimum.

If visibility becomes poor during an on-water training session, all boats should be directed to return the bank immediately with caution and wait for visibility to improve.

Athletes, coaches, clubs, and schools should be aware of the additional risk smoke or dust in the air poses to individuals, especially high-risk individuals with existing respiratory conditions.

### **1.5 Flow & Water Quality**

All athletes, coaches, clubs and schools should make every attempt to be familiar with any information regarding the flow and quality of the body of water they are training on.

No training should take place on a body of water where the local council or relevant authority has issued advice indicating the water is not safe for the planned activity.

If concerns about flow or water quality are present athletes, coaches, clubs, and schools should consider alternate training venues, or land-based training activities.

In the event of increased flow, athletes, coaches, clubs and schools should consider the ability of the individual or individuals to manage the conditions prior to commencing training, and at regular intervals throughout the training.

Adequate or additional supervision of junior, inexperienced, or high-risk crews should be in place.

### **1.6 Cold Weather and Cold-Water Exposure**

Athletes, coaches, clubs and schools should assess weather and water conditions prior to commencing training, including air temperature, water temperature, rainfall, wind strength, wind chill, and the anticipated duration of exposure.

Greater caution should be exercised for junior and novice athletes, masters athletes, individuals with medical conditions, and participants who may become wet or remain exposed for extended periods.

Where cold conditions are present, athletes and coaches should consider:

- Appropriate thermal and waterproof clothing;
- Reducing exposure duration;
- Modifying training intensity or duration;
- Additional coach boat supervision;
- Availability of warm, dry shelter and spare clothing; and
- Alternative land-based training activities where appropriate.

Clubs and schools should ensure procedures are in place to respond to cold-water immersion incidents, including access to appropriate first aid resources, dry clothing, shelter, and emergency medical assistance where required.

Additional caution should be applied when assessing single sculling activities in cold, windy, or deteriorating weather conditions.

## SECTION: 2

### ADVERSE WEATHER & CONDITION FORECASTS PRIOR TO COMPETITIONS

Rowing SA recognises the effort and planning required on the part of clubs and schools, athletes, volunteers, and officials to organise, travel to, and participate in competitions. As such, Rowing SA seeks to provide a framework of processes to take effect if there is a foreseeable increased risk to the wellbeing of athletes, coaches, volunteers, officials, and spectators that requires mitigation, or should extreme conditions be forecast and there is a reasonable likelihood that competition may not proceed as originally planned.

- The following measures will be initiated by the Rowing SA Office if the forecast is within the below parameters at the nearest relevant forecasting station to the competition venue at 9:00am one day prior to the regatta.
- Policy levels and actions will be communicated by 12:00pm one day prior to the regatta.
- If not in place by 12:00pm one day prior to the regatta the next decision regarding the regatta will be made by the Regatta Referee a minimum of 1hour prior to the scheduled start of racing.
- Once in place, no upgrade or downgrade will occur. If required, the next decision regarding the regatta will be made by the Regatta Referee a minimum of 1 hour prior to the scheduled start of racing.
- Policy levels and associated actions will be communicated to all club/school/officials contacts via email and distributed via the Rowing SA social media platforms.
- Each policy level represents an escalation of the previous level and the actions contained will be added to the previous actions.
- Premiership points will be awarded provided remaining entries meet race requirements as outlined in the Rowing SA Regulations for Boat Racing.
- Regional regattas may be treated differently and given further flexibility with regard to the competition venues.

#### 2.1 Heat

Forecast Temperature	Policy Level	Actions
Less than 30	-	-
30.1-34.0	Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Beat the Heat' document and 'Australian Rowing Sunsmart Guidelines' distributed.</li> <li>• Information on locations and type of first aid available distributed.</li> </ul>
34.1-38.0	Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Penalty free scratchings in place</li> <li>• Athletes/Coaches/Clubs/Schools advised to consider number of races and time between races.</li> <li>• All athletes advised to consider their condition and fitness for racing, with particular emphasis on young athletes and masters athletes (40+).</li> <li>• Information on location of drinking water distributed.</li> <li>• Regatta Safety Committee convened (to meet 1 hour and 15 minutes prior to the start of racing).</li> </ul>
38.1-42.0	Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regatta start time moved to 8:00am (minimum)</li> <li>• Following events removed from Regatta – All Novice, Yr 7/8, Yr 8/9 events and U16, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade, and Masters 1x, 2x, 2- events.</li> <li>• Consideration given to shortening race distances</li> <li>• Race intervals shifted to 4 minutes (where possible)</li> <li>• Lunch Break removed</li> <li>• Draw reissued</li> <li>• Target maximum regatta length – 5 hours.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where possible consider additional volunteers/officials and rotations out of sun exposed positions.</li> </ul>
Over 42.1	Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regatta cancelled</li> </ul>

### **School Premiership Series (SPS) Regattas**

The following will apply to SPS regattas ONLY, with the understanding that schools would prefer additional time to communicate with their students and parents where possible, and that given the additional importance of the SPS in being the sole decider of the School Premiership, and seeding for Head of the River, that some result from these competitions is required. Therefore, the identified preference is to ensure one rotation of all year levels can be completed on the day.

If at **4pm on the Thursday** prior to the regatta the forecast regatta day temperature is 37 or higher, the regatta will shift to the Heat Impacted Format. A Heat Impacted SPS Regatta will have an 8:00am start and 1 round of racing in the following order:

**Yr 8/9 -> Yr 7/8 -> Yr 9/10 -> Seniors**

Target regatta completion time – 11:30am.

On competition day the regatta will be monitored in compliance with Section 3.1 of this document.

SPS Points will be awarded as per the Rowing SA Regulations for Boat Racing.

### **2.2 Wind**

<b>Forecast Wind Speed</b> (For a sustained and/or significant portion of the regatta)	<b>Policy Level</b>	<b>Actions</b>
0km/h – 30km/h	-	-
30km/h – 40km/h	Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Penalty free scratchings in place</li> <li>Athletes/Coaches/Clubs/Schools advised to consider crews aptitude for conditions.</li> </ul>
41km/h – 50km/h	Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Novice events removed from regatta.</li> <li>All School Yr 7/8 and Yr 8/9 4x+s removed from regatta.</li> <li>Small Boat (1x, 2x, 2-) events for 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade, 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade, U17, U19, &amp; Masters removed from regatta.</li> <li>Amended draw issued</li> <li>Regatta Safety Committee convened (to meet 1 hour and 15 minutes prior to the start of racing).</li> </ul>
51km/h – 60km/h	Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All School Yr 9/10 4x+s and Senior 4+s removed from regatta.</li> <li>All remaining Small Boats (1x, 2x, 2-) and 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade events removed from regatta.</li> </ul>
61km/h and over	Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regatta cancelled</li> </ul>

## 2.3 Thunderstorms

Rowing SA will not make alterations prior to competitions should thunderstorms be forecast for a regatta day. Athletes, coaches, volunteers, officials, and spectators should proceed to the competition venue as initially planned. Further information on thunderstorms on competition days can be found in section 3.3 of this document.

## 2.4 Visibility

Rowing SA will not make alterations prior to competitions should visibility issues be forecast for a regatta day. Athletes, coaches, volunteers, officials, and spectators should proceed to the competition venue as initially planned. Further information on Visibility on competition days can be found in section 3.4 of this document.

## 2.5 Flow & Water Quality

Rowing SA does not monitor water quality or flow itself and will take advice from the Local Council the venue resides within, or directly from the recognised authority the relevant local council receives its advice from.

If advice that water quality or water flow is and/or will be unsafe for a scheduled competition is received –

Timeline	Actions
Prior to entries opening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Attempts will be made to shift the location of the competition to an alternate venue.</li><li>• Competition information amended on Rowing Manager</li><li>• Communication sent to clubs, schools, officials contacts detailing venue change and any impact on competition events or timelines.</li></ul>
Until release of final draw	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Attempts will be made to shift the location of the competition to an alternate venue.</li><li>• Draw amended as required.</li><li>• Communication sent to clubs, schools, officials contacts detailing venue change and impact on draw.</li><li>• Penalty free scratchings in place.</li></ul>
After release of final draw OR If alternate venue unable to be found	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Regatta cancelled</li></ul>

## 2.6 Cold Weather and Cold-Water Exposure

Where forecasts indicate unusually cold conditions, significant wind chill, heavy rain, or other conditions likely to increase the risk of cold-water exposure, Rowing SA may monitor conditions and communicate any additional risk mitigation measures to clubs, schools, athletes, officials, volunteers and spectators.

Where forecasts indicate conditions that may significantly increase the risk of cold-water immersion or participant welfare concerns, the Regatta Safety Committee may be convened prior to competition and consideration may be given to:

- Modifying race schedules;
- Adjusting race distances;
- Removing higher-risk boat classes or events; or
- Implementing additional safety and rescue measures.

Any actions taken will be communicated in accordance with the processes outlined in this section.

## **SECTION: 3**

### **ADVERSE WEATHER AND CONDITIONS POLICY ON AND DURING COMPETITION DAY**

Following is the Rowing SA **Policy** on Adverse Weather and Conditions on and during Competition Day. This policy applies to all athletes, coaches, volunteers, officials, and spectators, and all clubs and schools, present at the competition venue. The priority of this policy is the safety and welfare of all athletes, coaches, volunteers, officials, and spectators, over the completion of any event or regatta.

Should an adverse Heat or Wind forecast prompting a Level 2 policy response be in place, a Regatta Safety Committee will be appointed prior to the regatta. The Regatta Safety Committee will be comprised of:

- The Referee
- At least two additional Jury Members
- A member of Rowing SA Operational Staff

The purpose of the Regatta Safety Committee will be to assess the conditions for fairness and safety with consideration of the whole regatta venue and make recommendations to the Referee regarding the continuation of competition, and to be a point of contact for athletes, coaches, volunteers, officials, and spectators to voice their concerns. When required, the committee will be assembled by Rowing SA, who will communicate to all clubs, schools, and officials contacts, the individuals making up the Regatta Safety Committee for that regatta.

Decisions made on the day of competition impacting the competition, or regarding adverse conditions that arise on the day of competition, will be made by the appointed Referee.

The Referee may, at their discretion, allow for penalty free withdrawals for boat classes, categories, or crews, where aptitude for the conditions is a concern.

Any individual, crew, coach, club or school, may seek approval from the Referee to have a fine or infringement penalty waived due to inability to manage conditions, or concerns over the ability to manage conditions.

All decisions will be communicated at the venue over the PA, via text message (where possible) to club and schools contacts, and on Rowing SA social media platforms.

A maximum postponement limit of 90 minutes will be in place for all competitions. If 90 minutes has lapsed, and a new regatta start time cannot be determined the regatta will be cancelled.

When a postponement or cancellation is in place at a competition venue all athletes, coaches, volunteers, officials, and spectators, and all clubs and schools, are bound by that postponement or cancellation for the duration of the scheduled competition.

#### **3.1 Heat**

On competition days impacted by extreme heat the Rowing Australia Extreme Heat Recommendations (available here <https://rowingaustralia.com.au/ra-extreme-heat-recommendations/>) will be implemented, with the following amendments and additions:

- Requirements or actions regarding venue infrastructure or the provision of services, or items that are assigned to the Competition Manager or Event Director, will be managed by Rowing SA or the individual appointed by Rowing SA to carry out those tasks.
- There will be no official Technical Director or Delegate in place. The appointed Referee will fulfil these duties.
- There will be no official Medical Director or Venue Doctor in place, unless specifically arranged by Rowing SA and advertised prior to the competition.
- The Referee will ensure the conditions are continuously monitored.
- The Jury at any point throughout a regatta may modify the distance of races and communicate the change to all clubs and schools involved.

### **3.2 Wind**

The conditions caused by wind rather than the outright wind strength will form the basis of any decision made by the Referee on competition days impacted by wind.

The Referee will assess and monitor conditions at all relevant points on the course with reference to the increased risks of the manoeuvring and boat handling required at each location, and will consider in the first instance the safety of participants and spectators, followed by the fairness of the conditions for the competition.

If, at any point on the course, in the opinion of the Referee, the conditions caused by wind presents a safety concern or management concern for a particular individual, crew, boat class, event category, or the regatta as a whole, the Referee may, at their discretion:

- Amend the advertised distance, scheduled time, lane draw, or any other parameters of the race.
- Remove that individual, crew, boat class, or event category from the regatta.
- Postpone the regatta.
- Cancel the remainder of the regatta.

On competition days, when wind poses an increased risk to spectators, advice will be issued over the venue PA for spectators to seek appropriate shelter and be mindful of hazards caused by the conditions.

### **3.3 Thunderstorms**

On competition days when cloud cover is present or when thunderstorms are forecast the Referee and Regatta Control Operators will monitor the BOM Weather Radar and relevant lightning tracker resources (such as <http://www.farmonlineweather.com.au/radar/sa/adelaide>).

If a lightning strike is recorded within a 20km radius of the competition venue, and the storm front or prevailing wind indicates the storm and/or cloud mass is moving toward the competition venue, racing will be immediately suspended and all crews will be directed to return to the shore, get off the water, and find appropriate shelter.

All Boat Race Officials and Volunteers must also immediately return to the shore and find appropriate shelter.

While a thunderstorm risk is present all athletes, coaches, volunteers, officials, and spectators must stay off and away from the water and seek appropriate shelter indoors (such as in a solid building or totally enclosed car). Do not seek shelter under a tree (or group of trees) in the open or in small open structures such as picnic shelters, marquees or tents.

On competition days, when thunderstorms pose an increased risk to spectators, advice will be issued over the venue PA for spectators to seek appropriate shelter and be mindful of hazards caused by the conditions.

A time for the resumption of competition will be issued when the Referee considers the immediate threat has passed, is more than 10km from the competition venue, and the weather is travelling away from the venue.

### **3.4 Visibility**

A competition will be postponed until visibility meets 1000m minimum standard.

If after the start of competition visibility becomes poor, the competition will be suspended and all crews directed to immediately return to shore.

### **3.5 Flow & Water Quality**

If confirmation of poor water quality is received on the day or during a regatta, the regatta will be immediately cancelled and all boats required to return to the bank.

If flow worsens or, in the opinion of the Referee, presents a safety concern or management concern for a particular individual, crew, boat class, event category, or the regatta as a whole, the Referee may, at their discretion:

- Amend the advertised distance, scheduled time, lane draw, or any other parameters of the race.
- Remove that individual, crew, boat class, or event category from the regatta.
- Cancel the remainder of the regatta.

### **3.6 Cold Weather and Cold-Water Exposure**

On competition days, the Referee will monitor conditions including air temperature, water temperature, rainfall, wind strength, wind chill, participant exposure, and the potential consequences of a capsize or immersion incident.

If, in the opinion of the Referee, cold weather or cold-water conditions present an unacceptable safety risk to participants, officials, volunteers or spectators, the Referee may, at their discretion:

- Modify race schedules or race distances;
- Remove particular boat classes or event categories from competition;
- Increase safety boat and rescue requirements;
- Postpone racing; or
- Cancel part or all of the regatta.

Where cold-weather conditions are present, Rowing SA will encourage participants to wear appropriate clothing and ensure access to shelter, dry clothing and warming facilities where reasonably practicable.

Following any cold-water immersion incident, appropriate emergency response procedures should be implemented, including access to first aid, dry clothing, shelter and medical assistance where required.