



## **Department of Athletics**

### **Inclement Weather Plan**

In an ongoing effort to ensure the safety of McAllen ISD participants in athletics, an Athletic Inclement Weather Plan has been established. This plan reflects the best practices in dealing with heat, heat illnesses, cold, cold illnesses, lightening, and the well-being of student athletes. This policy has been generated in consultation with McAllen ISD Athletic Director, Assistant Athletic Directors, High School Athletic Coordinators, and High School Athletic Trainers.



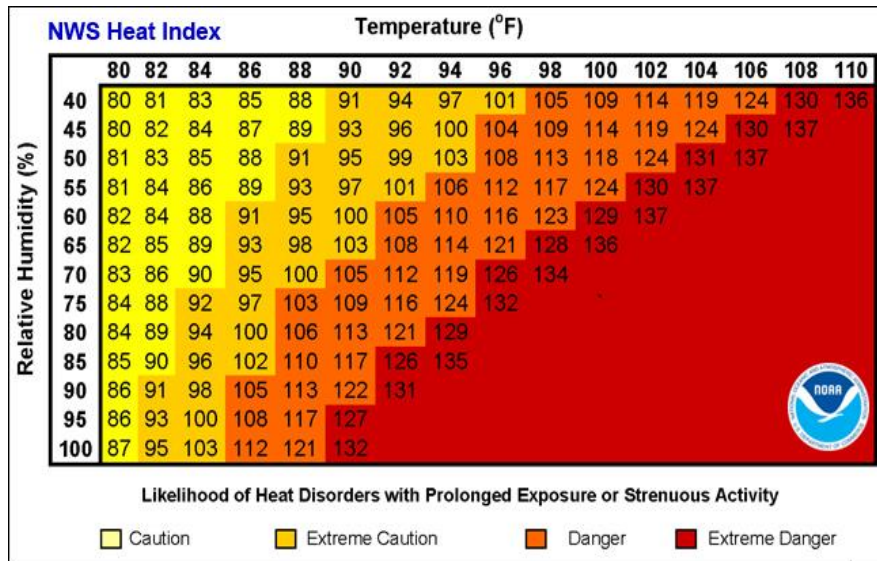
## **Department of Athletics**

### **High Temperature Weather Plan**

1. Weather Conditions and Heat Index are monitored daily by Athletic Trainers (High School) and MS Athletic Coordinators (Middle School). Coaches are then advised of weather conditions and if any modifications are necessary.
2. Water is available at all times during practice, without restriction.
3. McAllen ISD will use the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Heat Index Chart when making decisions involving practice or competition. This is to ensure consistent application across the school district.
4. When conditions (as assessed by NOAA Chart) reach the Danger Zone (dark orange on chart) practices will be modified. Possible modifications may include:
  - a. Equipment worn reduced (i.e. shells, helmet only, etc.)
  - b. Increased rest periods added to practice
  - c. Increased water breaks to ensure hydration
  - d. Practice length shortened
  - e. Practice surface adjusted (turf to grass, grass to air conditioned gym, etc.)

In the event of Heat Illness occurring, the following steps will be utilized:

1. Cool the victim first.
  - a. Remove heat retaining clothing
  - b. Move to cool area
  - c. Fan the victim
2. Activate Emergency Medical Services (EMS) as needed – Call 911.
3. Report any Heat Illness related occurrences to campus Athletic Coordinator and/or Principal.



### Heat Illness Important Things to Remember

- Acclimatization (getting athletes accustomed to work outs in the heat) is crucial in all sports.
- High Intensity exercise should be done in cooler parts of the day when possible.
- Breaks should be taken in shaded areas if possible.
- Water breaks should be frequent and water is to be available at all times regardless of breaks.
- Athletes will be at different levels of conditioning and acclimatization to the heat, therefore, they should be individually monitored for heat illness.

Prevention is the Best Medicine!!!



## **Department of Athletics**

### **Cold Weather Plan**

Understanding that cold temperatures negatively affect the body's regulatory system and that freezing temperatures are not required for athletes to sustain cold-related injuries are important to avoiding injuries and optimizing training conditions for athletes. In addition, windy and wet conditions increase the risk for cold-weather injuries (NFHS, 2019).

Wind chill is the estimate of heat loss based on temperature and wind speeds. A lower wind chill may increase the rate of cold-weather concerns. Understanding how the body loses heat and the collaborative effect of temperature and wind/wet conditions are crucial to preventing cold-weather injuries (NFHS, 2019).

Cold exposure can be uncomfortable, impair performance and even become life threatening. Hypothermia, a significant drop in body temperature, occurs with rapid cooling, exhaustion and energy depletion. The resulting failure to the temperature-regulating mechanisms may lead to a medical emergency.

Hypothermia frequently occurs at temperatures above freezing. A wet and windy 30-50 degree exposure may be as serious as a subzero exposure. For this reason, the McAllen ISD Athletics Department follows a cold weather policy using the Weather Bug system. The observed "feels like temperature" takes into account the effects of multiple parameters to determine how cold it feels outside.

Clothing is one of the most important parts of keeping the body warm. Athletes and staff should dress in layers and try to stay dry. Layers can be added or removed depending on temperature, activity and wind chill. Athletes should layer themselves with wicking fabric next to the body, followed by lightweight pile or wool layers for warmth. Athletes should use a wind block garment to avoid wind chill during workouts. Heat loss from the head, neck and hands may be as much as 50% of total heat loss; therefore, these areas should be covered at all times during cold conditions.

#### **COLD EXPOSURE**

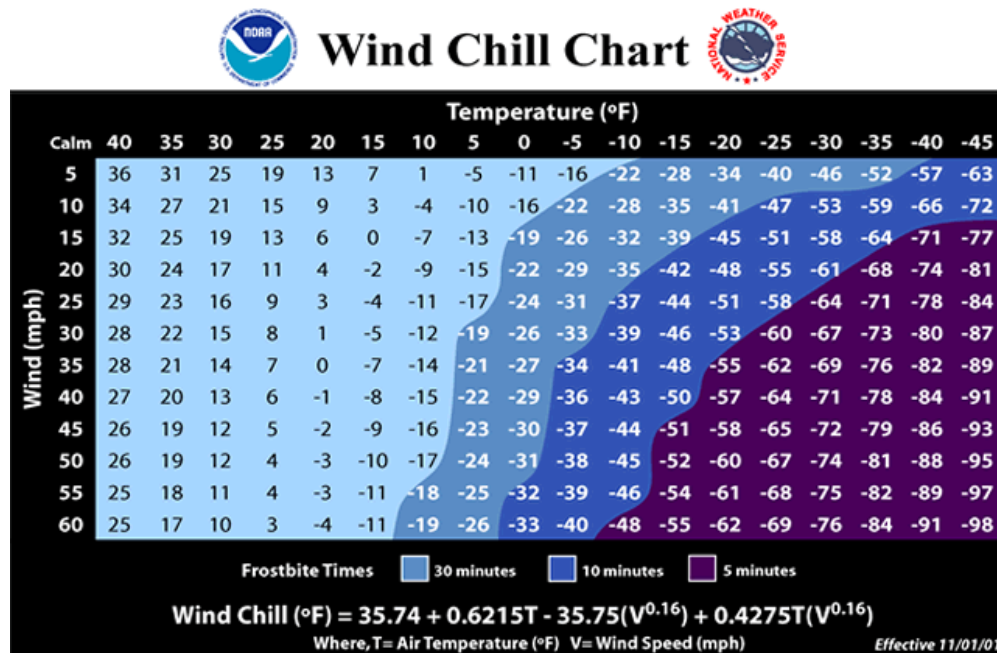
- Can trigger an asthma attack
- Can cause coughing, chest tightness, and burning sensation in the throat and nasal passages.
- Can result in a reduction in strength, power, endurance, and aerobic function.
- Results in core body temperature reduction, causing a reduction of motor output.
- All students should be issued proper gear for cold weather.
- If students do not have proper gear to wear they should not be outside. No exceptions.

## RECOGNITION OF COLD EXPOSURE

- Shivering reflex as the body attempts to generate heat.
- Excessive shivering will result in fatigue and loss of motor skills.
- Numbness and pain in exposed fingers, toes, ears, and exposed face.
- Drop in core temperature can result in sluggishness, slurred speech, and disorientation.
- Cooling will occur more rapidly when clothing and skin is wet from sweat or rain.

## PREVENTION – THE BEST METHOD OF MANAGEMENT IS PREVENTION

- Dress in layers.
- Cover the head to prevent excessive heat loss from the head and neck.
- Stay dry by wearing a wicking fabric next to the body and a breathable, water repellent outer layer.
- Stay adequately hydrated.
- Eat regular meals.
- Avoid alcohol, caffeine and nicotine.
- Educate participants, coaches, officials and administrators in recognition of cold-related illnesses.
- Consider cancellation of athletic events if weather conditions warrant.
- If unsure whether an athlete is hypothermic, err on the side of caution and treat accordingly.



## **HIGH SCHOOL PRACTICE PROTOCOL**

### **Wind Chill Factor 33°-25° F with precipitation:**

- 35 minutes of exposure / 20 minutes inside (may return outside after 20 min.)
- Dry clothing should be available at halftime (including socks, gloves, beanie)
- Athletes must be dressed in warmups with extremities covered
- All practices will be moved inside

### **Wind Chill Factor 31°-32° F with no precipitation:**

- 45-minute exposure/15 minute inside gym (may return outside after 20 minutes)
- Athletes must be in warm-ups with extremities covered

### **Wind Chill Factor 32° F degrees or lower with precipitation:**

- No outside exposure
- All practices will be moved inside

### **Wind Chill Factor 30° without precipitation:**

- 30 minutes of total exposure to wind chill factor
- 15 minutes' inside
- Warm-ups must be worn with all extremities covered at all times

### **Wind Chill Factor 25° F or lower:**

- No outside exposure
- All practices will be moved inside

## **HIGH SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION OF OUTDOOR COMPETITION**

- **Games to be postponed due to cold weather will be determined on a case by case basis by the McAllen ISD Athletic Administration, Campus Athletic Administration, Athletic Trainers, and Sport Head Coach**
- **Postponed games to be rescheduled will be determined by the Head Coach of the sport in conjunction with the Campus Athletic Administration and Athletic Department Administration. An outside sport game date will be considered for rescheduling if the following occurs:**
  - **Wind Chill Factor reaches 30° F or less with precipitation.**
  - **Wind Chill Factor reaches 25° F without precipitation**

## **MIDDLE SCHOOL PRACTICE AND GAME PROTOCOL**

### **Wind Chill Factor 45 degrees and lower with precipitation of any kind:**

- 35 minutes of exposure / 20 minutes inside (may return outside after 20 min)
- Dry clothing should be available at halftime (including socks, gloves, beanie)
- Athletes must be dressed in warmups with extremities covered
- All practices will be moved inside

**Wind Chill Factor 35 degrees and lower with no precipitation:**

- 30 minutes exposure / 15 minutes inside (may return outside after 15 min)
- Athletes must be in warmups with extremities covered
- All practices will be moved inside

**Wind Chill Factor 32 Degrees and lower with or without precipitation:**

- No outside exposure
- All games will be cancelled or postponed
- All practices will be moved inside



## **Department of Athletics**

### **Lightning Safety Plan**

Inclement weather, thunderstorms, and lightning can present dangerous situations for our student athletes when practicing outdoors or in a pool. Please be informed of the following regulations as recommended by UIL:

- At the high schools, the athletic trainer is in charge of declaring when activity needs to be suspended and athletes must leave the outdoors and go inside during lightning and thunderstorms. At the middle school, a coach of the sport involved with the assistance of the campus coordinator must make this decision.
- If coaching an outside sport or swimming, please use the WeatherBug app for guidance. The app is free of charge.
- When thunder is heard within 30 seconds of a visible lightning strike or a lightning bolt is seen, the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Suspend play or practice for at least 30 minutes and take shelter immediately. When lightning is within an 8-mile radius, all outside athletic activities must be suspended.
- The Nikki Rowe Natatorium is not exclusively equipped with lightning arresters, but is appropriately grounded. Swimmers at the Rowe natatorium must still be asked to get out of the pool and seek shelter within the hallway area or in a classroom.
- Once activities have been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes following the last sound of thunder or lightning prior to resuming activity and returning outdoors.
- Avoid being the highest point in an open field, as well as being on the open water. Do not take shelter under or near trees, flagpoles, or light poles.
- When activity is suspended, please bring athletes inside to a safe shelter: weight room, dressing area, gym, or school building.
- When managing victims of a lightning strike: Call 911 immediately; if necessary, move the victim with care to a safer location; evaluate airway, breathing and circulation, and begin CPR if necessary; evaluate and treat for injuries as necessary.
- All individuals have the right to leave an athletic site to seek shelter if they feel they are in danger of impending lightning activity, without fear of repercussion or penalty.
- Safety for all our student athletes, coaching staffs, and athletic training personnel is a priority and of utmost importance.