

## **SPECIAL OLYMPICS AUSTRALIA SUNSMART POLICY**

The following policy is in place to help Special Olympics Australia minimise the risks of overexposure to UV.



### **Rationale**

A balance of ultraviolet radiation (UV) exposure is important for health.

Too much UV from the sun can cause sunburn, skin damage, eye damage and skin cancer. Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world. Two in three Australians will develop some form of skin cancer before the age of 70.

People often experience sunburn and skin damage when playing or watching sport due to extended periods exposed to high levels of UV without appropriate sun protection.

Too little UV from the sun can lead to low vitamin D levels. Vitamin D is essential for the development and maintenance of healthy bones and muscles, and for general health.

### **Sun protection times**

Club officials, coaches and athletes are encouraged to access the daily local sun protection times at [sunsmart.com.au](http://sunsmart.com.au), on the free SunSmart app or in the weather section of the newspaper to assist with the implementation of this policy.

- Sun protection is needed from the beginning of September to the end of April and whenever UV levels are 3 and above. Particular care should be taken during the middle of the day when UV levels are most intense.
- From May to August in some parts of Australia, sun protection isn't usually needed unless near highly reflective surfaces such as snow, outside for extended periods or when the UV reaches 3 and above.

### **Schedules, fixtures and rule modifications (including a cancellation policy)**

Where possible, training, events and competitions are scheduled to minimise exposure to UV and heat. Training, events or competition should be cancelled or suspended when high risk conditions are forecast.

Where it is not possible to avoid peak UV and heat periods, the following interim steps are taken to minimise the risk of overexposure to UV and heat illness:

Warm-up activities are limited in duration and intensity.

The duration of the activity is reduced.

Activities start earlier in the morning or later in the evening.

Rest breaks and opportunities to seek shade and rehydrate are increased.

Officials rotate out of the sun more frequently than usual.

Player interchange and substitution is used more frequently than usual.

Activity is held at an alternative venue (e.g. training at a pool).

Officials, coaches and senior members act as role models by wearing sun-protective clothing and hats, applying sunscreen and seeking shade wherever possible.

## **Sun protection measures**

### **1. Clothing**

Sun-protective clothing is included as part of on and off-field uniform and uniform for officials and volunteers.

Tops/jerseys are made from UPF (UV protection factor) 50+ material and have long sleeves and a collar. Tops/jerseys are loose fitting and lightweight.

Where the competition uniform does not provide adequate sun protection, athletes are reminded to apply SPF 30 or higher sunscreen to all exposed skin and wear covering clothing whilst not on the field.

### **2. Sunscreen**

SPF 30 or higher broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen is promoted and/or provided to athletes. Athletes are encouraged to apply sunscreen 20 minutes before training or playing and to reapply every two hours or immediately after swimming or toweling dry.

Sunscreen is stored below 30°C and replaced once it is past the use-by date.

Athletes are encouraged to apply a generous amount of sunscreen (the equivalent of one teaspoon per limb).

The first aid kit includes a supply of SPF 30 or higher broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen.

### **3. Hats**

Wide-brimmed or bucket style hats are included as part of the on and off-field uniform (even if they can't be worn in actual play). Caps and visors do not provide adequate sun protection to the face, ears and neck and are not recommended.

### **4. Shade**

An assessment of existing shade has been conducted (using the SunSmart shade audit resource) at commonly used outdoor venues.

When not actively playing or between individual events, athletes are able to rest in shaded areas.

Where there is insufficient natural or built shade, temporary shade structures are provided or athletes are notified to bring their own temporary shade (e.g. tents or umbrellas).

The use of shade from buildings, trees and other structures is utilised where possible (e.g. for player interchange, marshaling areas, spectator areas).

Marshaling, interchange and presentation ceremony areas are protected by shade.

Athletes and officials rotate to cooler, shaded areas.

### **5. Sunglasses**

Athletes are advised to wear sunglasses that meet the Australian standard (AS/NZS 1067:2003).

## **Education and information**

The times when sun protection is required (as determined by SunSmart's daily sun protection times) are communicated to athletes and spectators.

Athletes are notified at the beginning of September that sun protection measures need to be implemented.

Athletes are notified at the start of May that sun protection measures are no longer required unless UV index levels reach 3 and above or when participating in alpine or water sports.

## Review

This SunSmart policy will be reviewed annually to ensure that the document remains current and practical. This policy was last updated on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2015.

### Relevant documents and links

**SunSmart:** [sunsmart.com.au](http://sunsmart.com.au)

**SunSmart sun protection times widget:** [sunsmart.com.au](http://sunsmart.com.au)

**SunSmart apps:** [sunsmart.com.au](http://sunsmart.com.au)

**Heat and UV Guide:**

[sunsmart.com.au/downloads/communities/sports-clubs/uv-exposure-heat-illness-guide.pdf](http://sunsmart.com.au/downloads/communities/sports-clubs/uv-exposure-heat-illness-guide.pdf)

**Shade audit:** [sunsmart.com.au/shade-audit/](http://sunsmart.com.au/shade-audit/)