

## 3.5 Sun Smart

Reference: SOA\_3.5PP – Sun Smart Policy and Procedure

### 1. POLICY STATEMENT

Special Olympics Australia is committed to safer sport for all and recognises the importance of minimising the risks of overexposure to UV. This policy provides guidelines for sun protection practices to be incorporated across all parts of the operation of this organisation.

### 2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to support the objectives of:

- increasing awareness of the importance of protecting both the skin and eyes from UV exposure.
- acknowledging ways to minimise the risks of overexposure of UV.
- incorporating sun protection into safe sport practices, uniforms and event planning.
- incorporating sun protection information and practices into training and development programs.

### 3. SCOPE

The policy is applicable to all athletes, coaches, volunteers, officials, committee members, staff, families and supporters of Special Olympics Australia.

### 4. DEFINITIONS

#### Heat illness

Heat illness can occur when a participant exercises vigorously in hot conditions. It may also occur with prolonged exposure to hot weather. In cool weather, heat illness can also present when exercising at high intensity.

Heat illness in sport presents as heat exhaustion or heat stroke. Symptoms may include light headedness, dizziness, nausea, obvious fatigue or loss of skill and coordination, unsteadiness, cessation of sweating, confusion, aggressive or irrational behaviours, collapse or ashen grey pale skin.

#### Ultraviolet Radiation (UV)

Ultraviolet radiation is a type of radiation that is produced by the sun. The sun's UV radiation is the major cause of sunburn, premature ageing, eye damage and skin damage leading to skin cancer. However, it is also the best natural source of vitamin D. (Sunsmart)

### 5. RESPONSIBILITIES

#### **Coaches, officials, committee members and staff**

Coaches, officials, committee members and staff are encouraged to be aware of and promote the importance of sun protection. This includes being responsible for ensuring sun safe practices are being adopted and demonstrating leadership by being a role model to others.

#### **Athletes, families and supporters**

Athletes along with families and supporters are responsible for understanding the need for good sun protection practices and follow the direction of coaches or other representative of Special Olympics Australia when directed in relation to this policy.

### 6. PROCEDURE

#### **6.1 Training, Events and Competitions**

#### **Special Olympics Australia**

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

Whenever UV levels reach three and above, sun (UV) protection is needed. UV index levels can be found at [sunsmart.com.au](http://sunsmart.com.au) or [bom.gov.au/weather/uv](http://bom.gov.au/weather/uv).

Where it is not possible to avoid peak UV and heat periods, the following interim steps are to be taken to minimise the risk of overexposure to UV and heat related 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
- ensure water is available and everyone is encouraged to maintain appropriate hydration
- officials rotate out of the sun more frequently than usual
- player interchange and substitution is used more frequently than usual
- activity is held at alternative venue (e.g. training at a pool)
- officials, coaches, committee members and staff act as role models by wearing sun-protective clothing and hats, applying sunscreen and seeking shade wherever possible.

## **6.2 Extreme Weather**

Extreme conditions are generally considered to be temperatures above 36 degrees. This should be used as a guide only as risk and comfort can be impacted by a number of additional factors including humidity, air flow and ambient temperatures.

In the event of extreme weather, the training or competition may be modified to make the best and most appropriate use of the venue's facilities to minimize the risk of overexposure to UV and heat illness. Where it is warranted, the event could be postponed or cancelled.

## **6.3 Sun Protection Measures**

### **6.3.1 Clothing**

Sun-protective clothing is to be included as part of on and off-field uniforms and uniforms for officials and volunteers. Tops/jerseys should be made from UPF (UV protection factor) 50+ material and have long sleeves and a collar. Tops/jerseys should be 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.

### **6.3.2 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 should be 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 should include a supply of SPF 30 or higher broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen.

Any volunteer, family or supporter who is exposed to the sun during the activity is encouraged to apply the above steps.

### 6.3.3 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.

### 6.3.4 Shade

An assessment of existing shade should be conducted (using the SunSmart shade audit resource) at commonly used outdoor venues. When not actively playing or between individual events, athletes should 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.

### 6.3.5 Sunglasses

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

## 6.4 Representative Teams

Representative teams have an important role in promoting and encouraging sun protection at Special Olympics Australia. Special Olympics Australia endeavours to ensure that the teams and athletes:

- are provided uniforms, including hats which provide best protection for UV
- are encouraged to demonstrate sun smart behaviours
- have leaders that stand up to be responsible and be good role models for safer sport practices – including sun protection – and actively encourage others to do the same

## RELATED DOCUMENTS

Club Leadership Handbook

## DOCUMENT CONTROL

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