



HOT WEATHER POLICY

MOTORCYCLING SOUTH AUSTRALIA INC.

INTRODUCTION

Motorcycling South Australia Inc. (MSA) has formulated this Hot Weather Policy to minimise the risk of injury, illness and possible death in South Australian motorcycle sports by assisting administrators, officials, coaches and riders to recognise and manage potentially dangerous situations.

This policy shall apply to all members, administrators, officials, coaches, volunteers and riders associated with Motorcycling South Australia Inc.

RATIONALE

MSA and all affiliated organisations need to ensure that a reasonable Duty of Care is provided to all riders, volunteers, officials and spectators. MSA encourages a common sense approach. This Policy focuses on the comfort and well being of all individuals and aims to maintain the highest levels of enjoyment and participation for all.

Hot weather can harm the performance and the health of all participants (riders, officials and spectators), and all levels from the recreation rider to the elite rider.

Exercising or undertaking official duties in hot weather conditions can place participants at risk of heat illness and in extreme circumstances, even death.

BACKGROUND

Physical activity in hot environments creates competitive demands on the cardiovascular system, which is required to increase blood supply to the exercising muscles. At the same time it must regulate the body temperature by increasing skin blood flow in order to produce the sweat that keeps the body cool.

Factors that can contribute to heat injury include:

- High ambient (air) temperature
- Solar radiation
- Humidity
- Dehydration
- Illness
- Medical conditions
- Affects of alcohol and/or drugs

Moderate to high intensity exercise in hot environments, with the associated fluid loss and elevation in the body temperature, can lead to:

- Dehydration
- Illness
- Heat exhaustion / Heat stress
- Heat stroke
- Decrease in performance

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INFORMATION

Dehydration

Fluid loss occurs during exercise, mainly due to perspiration and respiration. The loss of fluids makes a participant more susceptible to fatigue and muscle cramps. Inadequate fluid replacement before, during and after activity will lead to dehydration and may lead to heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

Heat Exhaustion / Heat Stress

Heat exhaustion follows from dehydration and is characterised by:

- High heart rate
- Dizziness
- Headaches
- Loss of endurance / skill / confusion
- Nausea
- Skin may be clammy / cool / sweating but there will be signs of vasoconstriction eg pale in colour
- Muscles cramps may occur due to dehydration
- Little urine passed, but highly concentrated
- Participant may collapse on stopping activity

What to do if you suspect heat exhaustion or heat stress

- Remove the participant from the track
- Lay the person down in a cool place
- Give plenty of cool water
- If the person is confused or unable to drink water seek medical help immediately

Heat Stroke

Heat stroke follows from severe dehydration and it has the potential to be fatal and must be treated immediately by a medical practitioner.

Persons who continue to participate when suffering from heat exhaustion may experience heat stroke. Heat stroke can still occur even if they have been drinking plenty of fluids.

It is vital to cool the person as quickly as possible. Symptoms include:

- Dry skin
- Confusion
- Collapsing

What to do if you suspect heat stroke

- Call a doctor or ambulance immediately
- Remove from the track and lay the person down in a cool place
- Give plenty of water if conscious
- Cool the person down by putting in a cool bath, shower or under a hose, apply wrapped icepacks to the groin and armpits or use wet towels
- Maximise air flow to the person by using fans or fan them with a wet towel

Motorcycling SA Inc. – Hot Weather Policy

When is it safe for adults to participate in hot conditions?

All hot environments present participants with some level of risk. The most effective way of evaluating the risk of participating in hot conditions for adults is by measuring the Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT), which takes into account both the ambient or air temperature and the humidity.

It is important to note that the higher the humidity, the less likely cooling will occur through the evaporation of sweat.

Calculating the WBGT

Measuring the WBGT is done by using a WBG Thermometer, this equipment is very expensive and not easily available.

It is possible to obtain an ambient temperature from the Bureau of Meteorology and then use the information to make educated decisions on what mechanism will need to be put in place to reduce the effects of extreme heat of participants.

Children, Gender and Heat

Children's bodies are different to adults and they are greater risk of heat illness. Prior to puberty the sweating mechanism which is essential for effective cooling, is poorly developed. The ratio between weight and surface area in the child is also such that the body absorbs heat more rapidly in hot conditions.

Children take longer to acclimatise to physical activity in heat than does an adult.

At an ambient temperature greater than 34 degrees Celsius there is an extreme risk of thermal injury to all children and also adolescent participants.

Females may suffer more during activity in hot environments due to the higher percentage of body fat.

RECOMMENDATIONS

What to Provide at a Meeting being held in Hot Weather

- When ever adults, children or adolescence are participating, provide plenty of cool drinking water
- Sunscreen
- Shelter
- Water spray bottles for officials
- Ice (optional)
- Sports drinks such as Gatorade or Poweraide (optional)

What is required at a Meeting being held in Hot Weather

- ◆ The Riders Briefing MUST include a warning of the dangers of competing in hot weather. The Steward has the power the cancel or postpone a meeting
- ◆ If medical personnel believe that heat illness is affecting a participant, that participant will no longer be permitted to officiate or compete

Motorcycling SA Inc. – Hot Weather Policy

IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY

The implementation of this Policy will be undertaken in stages, as listed below:

Stage 1

- ◆ Development and implementation of an educational program for participants and officials, to increase the awareness of the effects of hot weather on the body
- ◆ Distribution of the *Drink Up* information brochure to all licence holders and clubs
- ◆ *Drink Up* Information to be displayed next to each Track Licence at each meeting
- ◆ *Drink Up* information to be delivered over the public address system at meetings

Stage 2

- ◆ Provision of information on the MSA Web Site including links to the following web sites: Bureau of Meteorology, Sports Medicine Australia (SA) Branch and *SmartPlay*.
- ◆ Implementation of an Alcohol testing program in the form of Random Breath Testing. No reading higher than a blood alcohol content of 0.0 milligrams per 100 millilitres (0.0mg/100ml) will be accepted. Complete guidelines are available under the MSA Drug and Alcohol Policy

Stage 3

- ◆ Use of fine mist spray water bottles for officials who are positioned on tracks, where it is deemed not to interfere with the safety of the official or riders, and the establishment of a portable water cooling systems for riders which may include the use of fine mist sprays.

The implementation phase will be over a period of 2 years commencing in April 2005.

POLICY REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that it remains current and practical.