



Adverse and Severe Weather Policy.

Policy owner: Poole Athletic Club

Applies to: All club training sessions, coaching activities and club-organised outdoor activities.

Review date: Annually, or following any significant weather-related incident.

1. Purpose:

Poole Athletic Club is committed to providing a safe environment for athletes, coaches, volunteers and parents/guardians.

Outdoor athletics is inherently affected by weather conditions.

This policy sets out how Poole AC will assess adverse and severe weather, when training may be modified or cancelled, and the measures The Club will take to reduce weather-related risks.

The policy is intended to support sensible, proportionate decisions rather than require training to be cancelled whenever weather is unpleasant.

The Club will use the Met Office National Severe Weather Warning Service as its principal source of weather-warning information.

The Met Office uses yellow, amber and red warnings based on both the potential impact and likelihood of the weather. A red warning indicates dangerous weather where there is very likely to be a risk to life, causing widespread damage and severe disruption, while amber warnings indicate an increased likelihood of significant impacts and may require plans to be changed.

2. Responsibility for decisions:

The Club Committee, Lead Coach or designated Session Lead will be responsible for deciding whether a training session should:

- Proceed as planned;
- Proceed with modifications;
- Be shortened or relocated; or
- Be cancelled.

The person responsible for the session should check the latest weather forecast and Met Office warnings before the session and continue to monitor conditions during the session.

Coaches have the authority to stop or modify a session at any time if they believe conditions have become unsafe, regardless of whether an official weather warning has been issued. Individual coaches shouldn't feel obliged to continue a session simply because a warning has not been issued. Coaches decisions may differ based on based on the nature of their session.

At Group Sessions coaches in attendance should agree as a collective as to the decision on a planned or ongoing session and communicated to those impacted accordingly.

3. When training will be cancelled:

Training will be considered for cancellation when:

- A Met Office Red Weather Warning covers the location and period of the training session, particularly where the warning identifies a risk to life;
- Emergency services or local authorities advise people to avoid travel or remain indoors;
- The athletics facility or track is closed by the facility operator;
- Conditions create an immediate and unacceptable risk to athletes, coaches or volunteers;
- The facility cannot be safely accessed or evacuated;
- There is a significant risk from lightning, flooding, falling trees, structural damage, debris or other weather-related hazards; or
- The Head Coach, Session Lead or Committee considers that the risks cannot be adequately controlled through modifications to the session.

A Red Warning should be treated as a high level of expectation that an outdoor training session will not take place. The Met Office advises people in red-warning areas to take action to keep themselves and others safe and, where possible, avoid travelling.

4. Amber weather warnings:

An Amber Warning does not indicate a requirement to cancel, but it will trigger a review of the weather impact on a session. The session may be cancelled where the forecasted effects described in the warning make the planned activity unsafe. Factors considered may include:

- The type of weather involved;
- Expected severity and timing;
- Wind speed and gusts;
- Lightning risk;

- Extreme temperatures;
- Visibility;
- Flooding or surface water;
- Impact of Ice and snow on training surfaces;
- Condition of the track and surrounding areas;
- Travel conditions;
- The age and experience of athletes attending;
- The availability of suitable shelter;
- The ability of coaches to supervise safely; and
- Whether the session can be meaningfully modified.

The Met Office advises that Amber Warnings indicate an increased likelihood of potential disruption and that people should consider adjusting plans based on the factors identified.

5. Yellow weather warnings.

There is a low expectation that a Yellow Warning will require cancellation of activities.

The Club will consider the specific warning and would expect to be able to continue training with appropriate adjustments. A Yellow Warning might in rare cases still result in cancellation where the specific conditions experienced locally present an unacceptable risk.

The colour of the warning alone will not be the sole deciding factor; the actual conditions at the venue and the likely impact on participants will also be considered.

6. Extreme heat.

Hot weather can present a significant risk to athletes, particularly during prolonged or high-intensity exercise. Where temperatures are unusually high, coaches will consider:

- Reducing the duration or intensity of training;
- Increasing rest and recovery periods;
- Moving sessions to cooler times of day where possible;
- Avoiding prolonged exposure to direct sunlight;
- Providing additional drinking water;
- Encouraging athletes to bring sufficient water;
- Reducing or removing high-intensity conditioning;
- Using shaded areas for recovery;
- Adapting warm-ups and cool-downs;
- Allowing athletes to stop exercising whenever they feel unwell; and

- Cancelling the session if the combination of heat, humidity and activity creates an unacceptable risk.

Athletes should not be encouraged to train through symptoms of heat illness.

Symptoms such as dizziness, confusion, unusual weakness, headache, nausea, cramps or feeling faint should be treated seriously. The session should be stopped for the affected athlete and appropriate first-aid/emergency procedures followed.

Where a Met Office extreme-heat warning is in force, the Club will consider cancellation or substantial modification depending on the warning level and forecast conditions.

7. Thunderstorms and lightning.

Thunderstorms present a particular risk to outdoor athletics.

If lightning is observed or a thunderstorm is sufficiently close to present a credible risk, outdoor training will be suspended and athletes moved to a suitable safe location.

Training will not resume until the session lead is satisfied that the immediate lightning risk has passed.

Where thunderstorms are forecast to affect the training period, the Club may cancel the session in advance rather than rely on conditions improving after athletes have arrived.

8. High winds.

Training may be modified or cancelled where strong winds or gusts create hazards such as

- Falling branches or trees; unstable structures or equipment;
- Loose debris;
- Unsafe use of throwing equipment;
- Difficulty safely conducting sprinting, hurdling, vaulting jumping or throwing activities; or
- Unsafe travel to or from the venue.

Throwing events and other equipment-based activities should be particularly carefully assessed in high winds.

9. Heavy rain, flooding, snow and ice.

Training may be modified or cancelled where:

- The track becomes flooded or excessively slippery;
- Standing water creates a risk of slipping or injury;
- Ice or snow makes the track or access routes unsafe;
- Extreme cold conditions could result in hypothermia;
- Visibility becomes inadequate;
- Heavy rain prevents coaches from safely supervising athletes; or
- Localised flooding makes access to or departure from the venue unsafe.

The Club will take account of conditions on the ground rather than relying solely on the forecast.

10. Adjustments the Club may make.

Where conditions are adverse but training can safely continue, the Club may introduce one or more of the following measures:

- Provide additional drinking water;
- Remind athletes to bring their own adequate supply of water;
- Provide additional rest and recovery periods;
- Reduce session duration;
- Reduce training intensity or volume;
- Replace high-intensity work with lower-intensity activities;
- Alter the session plan;
- Use shaded or sheltered areas where available;
- Move activities away from exposed areas;
- Avoid certain events or equipment;
- Reduce the number of repetitions;
- Increase supervision;
- Conduct more frequent welfare checks;
- Move the session indoors where a suitable facility is available;
- Change the training time; or
- End the session early.

The decision to modify training should always prioritise athlete safety over the completion of a the planned session.

11. Athlete responsibilities.

Athletes and their parents/guardians are expected to take reasonable responsibility for their own safety by checking weather conditions before attending training;

- Bringing appropriate clothing for the conditions;
- Bringing sufficient drinking water;
- Following instructions from coaches;
- Reporting symptoms of heat, cold, illness, dizziness or injury immediately;
- Not continuing exercise if they feel unwell; and
- Following any Club cancellation or altered-session instructions.

Parents/guardians of junior athletes should ensure that athletes arrive appropriately prepared for the forecast conditions and be cognizant that in line with this policy the training session may change in timings and nature to reflect any deterioration of weather conditions.

12. Communication of cancellations.

Where a session is cancelled, the Club will publicise the decision through its normal messaging channels, such as the Club's messaging group, website, social media or email.

Where reasonably practicable, cancellation decisions should be communicated as early as possible to reduce unnecessary travel.

If weather conditions deteriorate unexpectedly, the Club may cancel or end a session at short notice.

Athletes and parents/guardians should not assume that a session will continue simply because no cancellation message has yet been received. They should check the Club's normal communication channels before travelling when severe weather is forecast.

As currently stands, given the speed of delivery of communications short notice changes to plans due to adverse weather will be made to the Poole Athletic Club P & C Facebook Group Page and/or Poole AC Members Facebook Group Page, which athletes/parents are invited to join. Coaches may also use their event groups Whatsapp Pages and Spond Groups.

13. During a session:

If conditions deteriorate after training has started, the session lead will reassess the risk. The session may be:

1. modified;
2. temporarily suspended;
3. moved to a safer area;
4. shortened; or

5. brought to a conclusion early.

If a session is stopped, coaches will ensure that athletes are supervised appropriately and contact will be made to notify parents/guardians that training has had to be stopped. Junior athletes are not be left without appropriate arrangements for their collection. Where immediate danger exists, emergency services should be contacted as appropriate.

14. Decision-making principle:

The Club will adopt a precautionary approach to severe weather. The absence of an official weather warning does not mean that conditions are safe, and the presence of a Yellow or Amber Warning does not necessarily mean that training will not go ahead. The key question will always be:

Can the session be conducted safely, with reasonable controls in place, given the actual and forecast conditions?

If the answer is no, the session will be cancelled or stopped.

15. Specific consideration at The Ashdown Track:

Where training is scheduled at the track & field facilities, which represents the club base, the designated Session Lead on the day for the club should liaise with the Ashdown Leisure Centre Duty Manager around the use of their facilities following the local weather warning. Based on the risk levels identified an agreed action plan will be executed via both parties.

16. Review:

This policy will be reviewed annually or following any significant weather-related incident, near miss or change in relevant guidance.

The Club will continue to monitor advice from the Met Office and relevant athletics/sporting bodies and authorities and will update this policy where necessary.

Approved by: Poole Athletic Club Committee.

Date approved: __3rd Sept 2026____ Next review date: _____August 2027__

By: **Graham Filmer** : Poole AC Chairman