



ETSU ATHLETIC TRAINING
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INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

The NCAA Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports released the following statement in June 2016 on inclement/hazardous weather for athletics departments.

Inclement weather poses unique challenges to athletics operations, partly because of the seasonal and geographic frequency of such events, and because of the disparate impact on members of the athletics team. Student-athletes, most of whom live on or very close to campus, are impacted differently than coaches, support staff, and athletics administrators, who may live at some distance from campus, and who are, therefore, subject to weather conditions that may be very different than those occurring on campus. They may also have the additional difficulty of a commute.

In recent years, the committee has fielded complaints from athletics support staff who report having to journey to campus during inclement weather to attend practices or other non-competition events, even when the campus has been effectively shut down and classes canceled. These complaints become more pronounced when athletics personnel believe themselves to be exposed to personal risks to attend what are perceived as non-essential activities, and especially for practices and other obligations for sports outside of the traditional season. Consequently, the committee provides member institutions the following guidance for inclement winter weather conditions:

- 1. Athletics department personnel must recognize that decisions affecting the broader institutional community also apply to them. Serious consideration should be given to the appropriateness of requiring student-athletes, coaches, and support staff to come to campus when the campus is otherwise closed and classes canceled. Local traffic authorities should be consulted about the safety of local roadways.*
- 2. Decisions about continued athletics activity should be centrally made, preferably by the athletics director or his/her designee. Coaches should not make such decisions for their own sports in isolation and independent of athletics administrators. Decisions should be made with the ultimate goal of protecting the well-being and safety of all athletics personnel and student-athletes. A full accounting of the disparate impact of inclement weather on athletics personnel and participating student-athletes should be made as part of the decision-making process.*
- 3. When a decision is made to open athletic or recreational facilities and to conduct athletics activities, standardized steps should be taken to ensure the safe access to those facilities and those parts of campus in which the activities will take place.*
- 4. Athletics personnel who determine that their personal safety might be jeopardized by commuting to campus in inclement and/or hazardous weather should be excused from all*

responsibilities without fear of reprisal or punishment, and reasonable accommodations for their absence should be made."

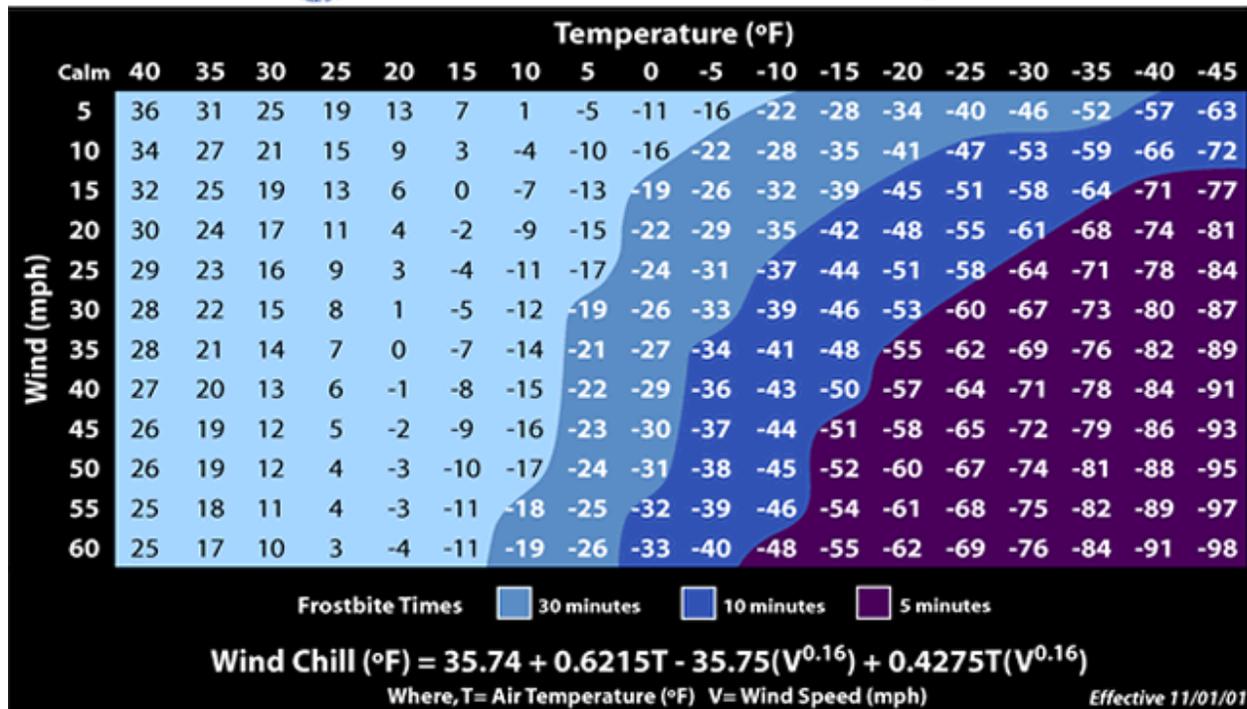
In the event the University closes and a home game is scheduled for that day, the Director of Athletics will be in communication with the President (or appointed representative) of the University to determine if the event is cancelled. If the event is not cancelled, essential personnel should attend or he/she should find an appropriate substitute

Traveling to practice during inclement weather: If the University closes due to an emergency, employees and students are asked to use common sense and make their best assessment of the safety and practicality of the situation. The parties involved should only attend work and/or practice if they can make it safely

Cold Weather Guidelines



Wind Chill Chart



The following Guidelines will be set for all practices and events hosted by East Tennessee State University:

Actual Temperature/Wind Chill is 16-30 degrees Fahrenheit	Athletic Trainers and Coaching staff will monitor for signs and symptoms of frostbite and/or hypothermia. Entire staff will inform athletes of proper dressing (see below) for practices and games in this temperature range.
Actual Temperature/Wind Chill is 1-15 degrees Fahrenheit	Any outdoor practice will be no more than 45 minutes at a time without period for warming. All Athletic Training and Coaching staff should be on alert for signs of frostbite and/or hypothermia. Required proper layering of clothes for practice (See Next Paragraph).
Actual Temperature/Wind Chill is below 0 degrees Fahrenheit	NO OUTDOOR PRACTICE PERMITTED. If practice is occurring during this period and temperature drops below 0, Athletic Training staff will notify coaches to stop practice and move inside immediately to avoid over-exposure to cold.

During periods of cold temperature, it will be encouraged that all East Tennessee State University Athletes, Coaches, and Support Staff to be dressed appropriately, in layers for any outdoor practices or events that are in cold weather. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Layered clothing around the midsection
- Gloves
- Long Sleeves
- Long pants designed to insulate wearer, Such as Sweatpants and a shell to include protection from wind
- Sweatshirt or jacket that would break the wind and insulate
- Face and ear protection, such as a face mask or earmuffs
- Winter hats
- Moisture wicking or wool socks

All Staff Athletic Trainers, Coaches, and members working with both groups should look for all signs and symptoms of Cold Injuries:

Frostnip/Frostbite

- Pale Skin
- Discolored Skin, Blue and/or purplish hue
- Skin cold and hard to touch to others
- Lack of sensation
- Burning, shooting pain in effected region
- Blistering

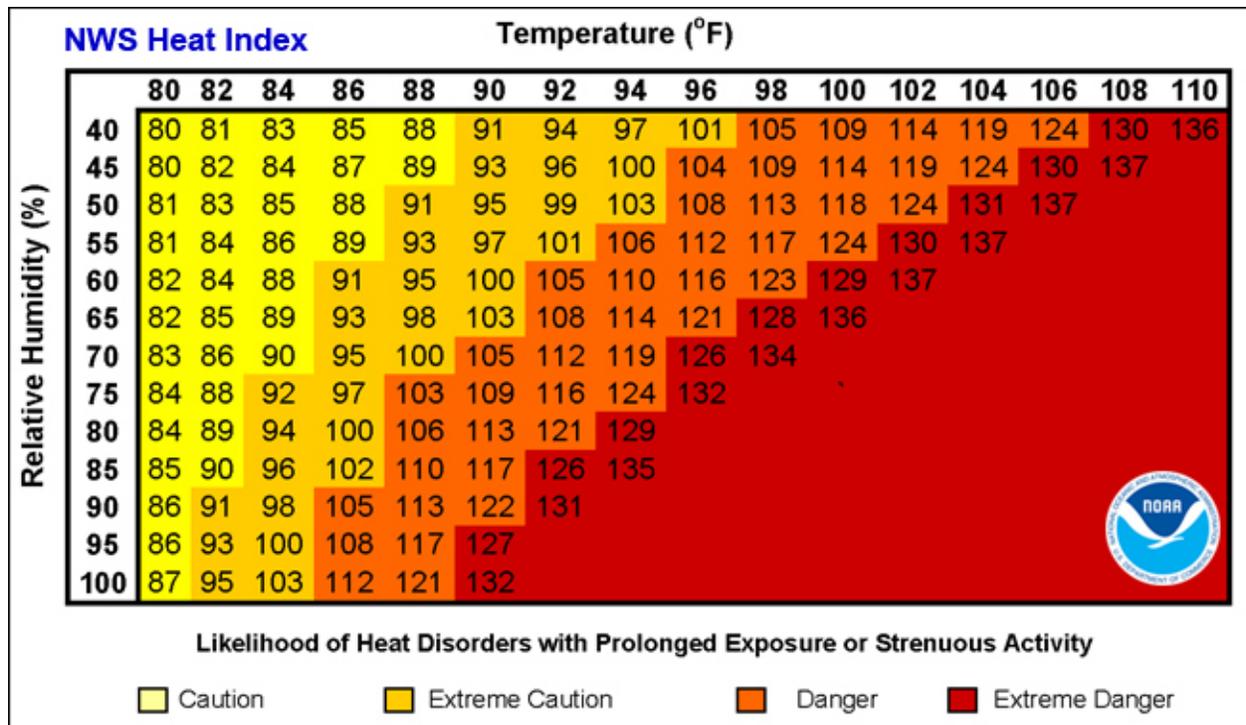
Hypothermia (Mild 95-96.8 core temperature; Moderate/Sever 90-94.9 core temperature)

- Vigorous Shivering
- Cold Extremities,
- Lethargic, feeling, Impaired mental function (acting differently than usual)
- Slurred Speech
- Decrease in Blood Pressure
- Cyanosis (Discoloration) of the lips

- Impaired Gross Motor Control
- Body Temperature has dropped below 98.6 Degrees
 - More of a concern if core body temperature drops below 95 degrees
- Dilated Pupils
- Loss of Consciousness
- Weak, slow pulse
- Decreased breathing (weaker breaths, extremely hard to breathe)

Heat Exposure Guidelines

The sports medicine staff, in conjunction with the coaching staff, will be responsible for monitoring the student-athletes during times of high heat exposure. It is the responsibility of the athletic training staff alongside the coaching staff for the covered sports, to spot signs of heat illnesses (Listed on next page). The ETSU Athletic Training staff will use guidelines given by the National Weather Service to monitor heat temperatures at all athletic practices, games and events hosted by ETSU athletics with Athletic Training Staff members on site.



The Guidelines used by ETSU will be the Following:

Below 95 Degrees Heat Index	Provide ample amounts of water, allowing for consumption for all athletes during practice. Monitor heat index and temperature every 30 minutes for temperature change.
95 – 100 Degrees Heat Index	Provide ample amounts of water, allowing for consumption for all athletes constantly during practice. Watch/monitor athletes carefully for necessary action. Mandatory water breaks every 30 minutes for 10 minutes in duration. Ice towels for cooling. Monitor heat index and temperature every 30 minutes for temperature change.
100-104 Degrees Heat Index	Provide ample amounts of water, allowing for consumption for all athletes constantly during practice. Watch/monitor athletes carefully for necessary action. Mandatory water breaks every 30 minutes for 10 minutes in duration. Ice towels for cooling. For contact sports and equipment sports: Allow for removal of equipment when not in contact. Reduce time of outside activity when applicable. Communicate with possible change in practice time Monitor heat index and temperature every 30 minutes for temperature change.
>104 Degrees Heat Index	NO OUTDOOR ACTIVITY

All Athletic Trainers, Coaches, and members working with these two groups for assigned sports teams should be on the lookout for all signs and symptoms of possible Heat Illness:

- Cramps
- Weakness/fatigue
- Weak, rapid pulse
- Incoherence
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Flushed, Red Skin
- Pale skin, very warm to touch
- Profuse sweating
- Lack of Sweating, sweating has stopped
- Visual impairment.
- Dark Color of urine (if reported by athlete)
- Chills
- Irrational behavior
- Hyperventilation

Treatment:

If a certified athletic trainer is NOT PRESENT:

1. Immediately contact ETSU Athletic Trainer.
2. Activate EMS by calling ETSU public safety at 423-439-6900 or 423-439-4480.

3. Should no member of the ETSU Athletic Training Staff be available at the time, the athlete should be sent to the Johnson City Medical Center Emergency Room or comparable emergency room for immediate care.

If a certified athletic trainer is PRESENT:

1. Determine if the emergency action plan needs to be activated. If so, designate another individual to activate emergency medical services.
2. Treat the individual according to current medical practices. See below.
3. When emergency medical services arrive, accompany or designate a responsible liaison to accompany the individual to the hospital.
4. Notify the Director of Athletic Training Services and Director of Sports Medicine.

Treatment:

Exercise-associated muscle (heat) cramps:

- Stop activity. Replace lost fluids with high sodium drink such as Gatorade. Provide mild stretching and massage to affected area.

Heat syncope:

- Move athlete indoors or to a shaded area. Monitor vital signs. Elevate legs above head and rehydrate.

Heat exhaustion:

- Move athlete to cooler environment. Measure core temp w/ rectal thermometer (if available). Remove excess clothing. Cool athlete by applying ice towels or ice bags to axillae, chest, and groin if temp > 102°F.

Exertional heat stroke:

- Active EMS. Monitor core temp w/ rectal thermometer (if available)/ Assess cognitive function. Lower core temp as quickly as possible (cold water tub 35 – 59°F). Remove from tub once core temp reaches 101-102°F.

Return-to-Play Considerations:

Return-to-play after heat exhaustion:

- The athlete should be symptom free and fully hydrated.
- He or she should follow up with an ETSU team physician for clearance or, at minimum, a discussion between athlete, Athletic Trainer, and team physician should occur.
- Avoid intense practice in heat until at least the next day to ensure recovery from fatigue and dehydration. (In severe cases, intense practice in heat should be delayed for more than 1 day.).

Return to Play after Exertional Heat Stroke:

- Physician clearance is required before returning to exercise. The athlete should avoid all exercise until asymptomatic and all laboratory tests are normal. Severity of the incident should dictate the length of recovery time. The type and length of the RTP program may vary among individuals, but a general program may include:
- Easy-to-moderate exercise in a climate-controlled environment for several days, followed by strenuous exercise in a climate-controlled environment for several days

- Easy-to-moderate exercise in the heat for several days, followed by strenuous exercise in the heat for several days
- If applicable to the individual's sport: easy-to-moderate exercise in the heat with equipment for several days, followed by strenuous exercise in the heat with equipment for several days.

The following guidelines are the most recent recommendations for treatment of exertional heat stroke by the American College of Sports Medicine (2007):

1. Refrain from exercise for at least 7 days following release from medical care.
2. Follow up in about 1 week for physical exam and repeat lab testing or diagnostic imaging of affected organs that may be indicated, based on the physician's evaluation.
3. When cleared for activity, begin exercise in a cool environment and gradually increase the duration, intensity, and heat exposure for 2 weeks to acclimatize and demonstrate heat tolerance.
4. If return to activity is difficult, consider a laboratory exercise-heat tolerance test about one month post-incident.
5. Clear the athlete for full competition if heat tolerance exists after 2-4 weeks of training.

Lightning Safety Policy

Lightning is the most consistent and significant weather hazard that may affect intercollegiate athletics. Within the United States, the National Severe Storms Laboratory (NSSL) estimates that 100 fatalities and 400-500 injuries requiring medical treatment occur from lightning strikes every year. While the probability of being struck by lightning is extremely low, the odds are significantly greater when a storm is in the area and the proper safety precautions are not followed.

Weather Alert System and Chain of Command

- a. The certified athletic trainer (ATC) at the outdoor sporting event will be using WeatherSentry to watch the weather. This system will allow us to see the approximate distance the inclement weather is from the ETSU campus and the estimated time of its arrival to the sporting event. This program will tell when there is lightning strikes within a 30 mile radius and as it moves closer.
- b. The game manager and the athletic trainer will obtain a weather report each day prior to practice or an event.
- c. The certified athletic trainer(s) outdoors covering the athletic event(s) will be responsible for informing coaches, athletes, game administrators, officials, and spectators when inclement weather or lightning is approaching and the activity must be suspended or postponed, and/or the field or venue must be evacuated.
 - An exception to this rule would be in the cases of practices for men's golf, women's golf, cross-country, outdoor track and field, men's tennis, women's tennis, and women's triathlon where the head coach would be responsible for suspending the activity in the absence of a certified athletic trainer.

- For men's and women's golf, the head coach will be responsible for making prior arrangement with course officials to ensure that they are notified of approaching weather systems which could affect the game or practice sessions.
- In the cases of Cross Country, Track and Field, and Triathlon practicing off campus, the head coach would be responsible for suspending activity when inclement weather is approaching if no certified athletic trainer is present.

Suspension of Activity and Evacuation Plan

- a. The decision to suspend activity will be made by the sports medicine staff along with the game administrator and officials.
 1. The weather alerts from WeatherSentry will alert us when there is lightning within 10miles
 2. Visible lightning in the vicinity
 - The "flash-to-bang" method can also be used when lightning is visible to estimate the distance lightning is from the area. The "flash-to-bang" method works as follows: begin counting on a lightning flash and stop counting with the first subsequent sound of thunder. Divide the time from lightning to thunder (seconds) by 5 to determine the distance (miles) of the lightning.
- b. Once it has been determined there is danger of a lightning strike, the certified athletic trainer covering the athletic event will notify the head coach, game administrator, and/or officials that the activity must be suspended. A subsequent horn, whistle, or announcement will summon athletes from the playing field.
 - At 10 miles out Baseball, and Softball will tarp and cover their field as quickly as possible and take cover in there expected evacuation site.
- c. Immediately following the announcement to suspend activity, all athletes, coaches, officials, and support staff should evacuate the playing field to the nearest enclosed, grounded structure.

Suggested safe evacuation shelter sites at East Tennessee State University are as follows:

- **Baseball Game or Practice:** Visiting team will go to their bus and Home team will go to the team vans or concourse area.
- **Softball Game or Practice:** Visiting team will go to their bus, and Home team will take shelter in their vehicles.
- **Men's/Women's Soccer Game or Practice:** Visiting team will go to their bus. Home team will go to the women's restroom or football press box as time/access allows.
- **Men's/Women's Tennis Match or Practice:** Visiting team will go to their Vans/Bus and home team will take shelter in their vehicles or football press box as time/access allows.
- **Golf Match or Practice:** Evacuate to the course to the clubhouse or restrooms.
- **Cross Country Race Practice:** Evacuate to ETSU/MSHA Athletic Center if possible, or another suitable structure along the course. A ditch without water is a last resort.

- If you are unable to seek shelter immediately, seek the nearest flat area or a ditch without water. Assume a crouched position on the ground with only the balls of your feet touching the ground, wrap your arms around your knees, and lower your head. Minimize your body's surface area in contact with the ground – do NOT lie flat.
 - **Outdoor Track and Field Race or Practice:** Visiting team will go to their bus and Home team will take shelter in their vehicles
 - **Triathlon Race or Practice:** Evacuate to ETSU/MSHA Athletic Center if possible, or another suitable structure along the course. A ditch without water is a last resort.
 - If you are unable to seek shelter immediately, seek the nearest flat area or a ditch without water. Assume a crouched position on the ground with only the balls of your feet touching the ground, wrap your arms around your knees, and lower your head. Minimize your body's surface area in contact with the ground – do NOT lie flat.
- d. In case of game situations, spectators will also be informed of the threatening weather. Once the game officials have suspended the activity, a member of the sports information or game management staff will make an announcement via the public address system and recommend that fans evacuate the field to an enclosed shelter area. **The ETSU sports medicine staff is NOT responsible for spectator safety from lightning or other severe weather after an appropriate warning announcement has been made by the game management staff.**

Resumption of Activity

- a. The decision to resume athletic activity will be made by the certified athletic trainer responsible for covering the event, along with the game officials, and game administrator. The decision to resume activity will be based on one of the following criteria:
 - a. An “all clear” message from WeatherSentry, indicating that the area is lightning free and it is safe to resume activity. This message will be sent from the alert system 30 minutes following the last lightning strike in a 10 mile radius of campus.
 - b. At least thirty (30) minutes AFTER the last lightning strike within a 10 mile radius according to the “flash-to-bang” method.