



BMX SPORTS WESTERN AUSTRALIA

COMPETITION AND HYDRATION IN EXTREME TEMPERATURES

RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES

General

Children, adolescents and adults are covered simultaneously by the recommendations in these guidelines.

If a large increase in temperature is likely to occur during an event, parents and officials should take extra care to ensure riders and volunteers are sufficiently hydrated and shade is provided.

Greater care needs to be taken of riders who are not fit, overweight or with a disability, when competing in high temperatures.

Education

All riders, volunteers and officials should be educated on the importance of sun safety and how to be “sun smart”.

The education program should be conducted at the beginning of the hot weather season; however, if this is untimely then it should be conducted at a more appropriate time.

“Sun smart” signs and pamphlets should be displayed and available for riders, parents and volunteers at all events.

Attire

All riders must wear full safety equipment at all times while competing on the track regardless of the temperature on the day.

On days of high temperature riders should shelter in shade in between races and leave their helmet and gloves off until they reach the last section of staging but must be fully attired prior to taking up their gate position.

All riders should remove their helmet and gloves immediately on becoming stationary in the scoring area after crossing the finish line.

Riders should be wearing sun safe attire on competition days and whilst exposed to the sun (except when competing), hats or caps should also be worn.

All officials and volunteers must be seen setting a sun smart example. During competitions they are encouraged to wear collared shirts, hats or caps and where appropriate sunglasses.

Sunscreen

Sunscreen should be provided and located in and around the competition arena. In doing so we are ensuring it is convenient as possible for riders, officials and volunteers to use.

The sunscreen must be of the highest quality and meet all Australian standards.

Shade

Shade shall be provided at all events in staging and finish areas. Shade should also be provided in other areas where participants, officials and volunteers will be waiting for long periods of time unprotected from the sun.

Public Announcements

During competition, public announcements should be regularly made reminding those at the event to keep drinking water, apply sunscreen and remain in the shade wherever possible.

This will help to ensure that fluid intake and sun safety is kept high. It will also ensure that the Association and Clubs are discharging their duty of care to their members and volunteers. This will be a positive public relations tool as the sport will be seen as constantly considering the health and safety of its members, officials and volunteers.

Fluids

Riders, officials and volunteers should drink at least 7 – 8ml of fluid per Kg of body mass to diminish the risk of heat illness (about 500ml for a 65Kg person) before competition commences.

Children can stave off dehydration during 3 hours of competition in 35 deg heat if enough fluid is consumed. Fluid should begin to be consumed at least two hours before competing to promote adequate hydration and allow time for excretion of excess water.

There should be a number of water stations in and around the competition arena. They should be located in the staging and finish line areas.

The water should be cooler than the ambient, but not freezing, as this will aid in the cooling process.

Diluted sports drinks, cordial and fruit juices should be made available or recommended. These fluids will be more palatable to younger participants and will be beneficial for replacing fluids, energy and electrolytes lost during competition. It will delay the onset of competition-induced exhaustion and hence aid in the prevention of heat stroke.

Additional water should also be provided so as to allow participants to douse themselves and thereby assisting in the cooling process e.g. spray bottles, hoses and buckets.

What is heat injury?

Heat injury may present itself in varied forms, including cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

Heat Exhaustion

Dehydration can lead to Heat Exhaustion. Symptoms of Heat Exhaustion may include:

- high heart rate
- dizziness
- headache
- loss of endurance/skill
- confusion
- nausea
- the skin may still be cool/sweating, but there will be signs of developing vasoconstriction e.g. pale colour
- athletes will pass little urine, which will be highly concentrated
- cramps may be associated with dehydration
- the rectal temperature maybe up to 40OC
- the athlete may collapse on stopping activity.

If an athlete or volunteer is exhibiting signs of heat stress or heat exhaustion they should stop, drink more fluids and cool down. Remove the person from the track, lay the person down in a cool place and give plenty of cool water.

If the person is confused, unable to drink water or vomiting, seek medical help immediately.

Heat Stroke

Severe dehydration may lead to Heat Stroke, which is potentially fatal and must be treated immediately by a medical practitioner. Riders who keep participating when suffering from heat exhaustion may experience heat stroke. Heat stroke can still occur, even if the rider has been drinking plenty of fluid, and it is important to cool the rider as quickly as possible.

Heat stroke symptoms include;

- dry skin
- confusion
- collapsing

If a rider is showing any symptoms of heat stroke take the following action:

- call a doctor or ambulance immediately
- remove the victim from the track
- lay the victim down in a cool place
- give the victim cool water to drink if conscious
- cool the victim by putting in a cool bath, shower or under a hose
- apply wrapped ice packs to the groin and armpits or use wet towels
- maximise airflow over the victim with a fan or fan them with towels.