



HEAT AND HYDRATION GUIDELINES

(updated 8/24/26)

Early fall outdoor practices are conducted in very hot and humid weather in many parts of the United States. Due to the equipment and uniform needed in football, most heat problems have been associated with football. During hot weather, all athletes are subject to the following:

- 1) *Heat Cramps* – Painful, involuntary cramping often in the legs, arms, or abdomen with muscle contraction. Heat cramps can easily be treated with rest, stretching of the muscle, and replacement of fluid and electrolytes.
- 2) *Heat Syncope* – Occurs when an individual in a hot environment does not have adequate blood flow to the brain, causing the person to lose consciousness.
- 3) *Heat Exhaustion* - Most common heat-related condition in active populations. It is the inability to continue exercise in the heat due to cardiovascular insufficiency (not enough blood being pumped to the heart) and energy depletion that may or may not be associated with physical collapse.
- 4) *Heatstroke* – An acute medical emergency related to thermoregulatory failure. Associated with nausea, seizures, disorientation, and possible unconsciousness or coma. It may occur suddenly without being preceded by any other clinical signs. The individual is usually unconscious with a high body temperature and a hot dry skin (heatstroke victims, contrary to popular belief, may sweat profusely)
- 5) It is believed that the above-mentioned heat stress problems can be controlled, provided certain precautions are taken. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Sports Medicine, heat related illnesses are preventable.



GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

The following practices and precautions are recommended to prevent heat related illnesses:

- 1) Educate student athletes and parents about heat illnesses and prevention in compliance with Texas Education Code.
- 2) Each athlete **MUST** have a physical exam with a medical history when first entering a program and an annual health history update. History of previous heat illness and type of training activities before organized practice begins should be included. State high school association's recommendations should be followed.
- 3) It is clear that top physical performance can only be achieved by an athlete who is in top physical condition. Lack of physical fitness impairs the performance of an athlete who participates in high temperatures. Coaches should know the **PHYSICAL CONDITION** of their athletes and set practice schedules/activities accordingly. Along with physical conditioning, the factor of acclimatization to heat is important. Acclimatization is the process of becoming adjusted to heat and it is essential to provide **for GRADUAL ACCLIMATIZATION TO HOT WEATHER**. It is necessary for an athlete to exercise in the heat if he/she is to become acclimatized to it. It is suggested that a graduated physical conditioning program be used. Final stages of acclimatization to heat are marked by increased sweating and reduced salt concentration in the sweat.
- 4) Staff athletic trainers or campus coaches/coordinators will modify work to rest ratios, practice schedules, and amount of equipment based on the environment.
- 5) The perception that water should be withheld from athletes during workouts **has NO SCIENTIFIC FOUNDATION**. The most important safeguard to the health of the athlete is the replacement of water. Water must be on the field and readily available to the athletes at all times. It is recommended that a minimum of five minutes be scheduled for a water break every half hour of heavy exercise in the heat. **WATER SHOULD BE AVAILABLE IN UNLIMITED QUANTITIES**. Check and be sure athletes are drinking water. Cold water is preferable. Drinking ample water before practice or games has also been found to aid performance in the heat.
- 6) Salt should be replaced daily. Modest salting of foods after practice or games will accomplish this purpose. Salt tablets are not recommended. **ATTENTION MUST BE DIRECTED TO REPLACING WATER – FLUID. REPLACEMENT IS ESSENTIAL**.
- 7) Weight charts are tools that can be utilized to assess an athlete's fluid replacement between practices. It is recommended that weight charts be utilized during periods of



time where 2 practices are occurring during a 24 hour period, or if there is an individual athlete that seems to be significantly struggling with heat and/or fluid replacement, such as athletes that are known to sweat excessively. In circumstances where weight charts are deemed appropriate to use, athletes should be weighed before and after EACH practice. A 3% weight loss through sweating is generally safe. However, a weight loss over 3% could be potentially dangerous and an athlete should be restricted from activity in hot and humid conditions until their weight loss percentage has been restored to a less than 3% loss.

- 8) Observe athletes carefully for signs of trouble, particularly athletes who lose significant weight and the eager athlete who constantly competes at his/her capacity. Some trouble signs are nausea, incoherence, fatigue, weakness, vomiting, cramps, weak rapid pulse, visual disturbance and unsteadiness.
- 9) Athletes with special medical conditions should notify coaching and/or athletic training staff and have the ability to remove themselves from practice.
- 10) Cooling by evaporation is proportional to the area of the skin exposed. In extremely hot and humid weather, reduce the amount of clothing covering the body as much as possible.
- 11) Know both the temperature and humidity. The greater the humidity, the more difficult it is for the body to cool itself.
- 12) To identify weather-stressing conditions, regular monitoring of environmental conditions will be performed daily.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- 1) Every school must have an emergency plan written with copies available to all staff. The EAP must include procedures to address heat emergencies that include onsite rapid cooling using cold water immersion or equivalent means. Be familiar with immediate first aid practice and prearranged procedures for obtaining medical care, including ambulance service. You are required by UIL regulations to train your participants for how to handle a medical emergency situation.
- 2) Rapid cooling zones must be available at all practices and competitions where the WBGT is above 82. Rapid cooling zones can be cold water immersion tubs or tarps that will enable the use of the TACO method for cooling.



MEANS OF MONITORING

CFISD will monitor heat conditions using Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT). WBGT takes into account ambient temperature, relative humidity, wind, and solar radiation from the sun to get a measure that can be used to monitor environmental conditions during exercise.

- 1) At the high school and middle school levels campus athletic trainers and coaches will use the Perry Weather system to monitor **WBGT** and **severe weather activity**.
- 2) All coaches assigned a weather app by district personnel must keep the app active and on when instructing students in and out of school.
- 3) WBGT readings must be taken within 15 minutes prior to the start of practice to ensure accuracy.
- 4) If there is a time that the Perry Weather app is not able to be used, a Kestrel device will be used on the High School campus.
 - a. The instrument will be set up 30 minutes prior to practice and will be read 15 minutes before practice to determine what level of the Heat Policy will be utilized for practice.
 - b. Readings will be taken every 30 minutes and will be based on a 30 minute average.
- 5) In the event of severe weather situations, a district wide email will be sent out by the athletic office to announce the suspension of athletic activity for a designated amount of time.
- 6) When possible, the same individual should take all WBGT readings during the practice window for consistency.

SUMMARY

The main problem associated with exercising in the hot weather is water loss through sweating. Water loss is best replaced by allowing the athlete unrestricted access to water. Water breaks two or three times per hour are better than one break an hour. The best method is always to have water available and to allow the athlete to drink water whenever he/she needs it. Never restrict the amount of water an athlete drinks and be sure the athletes are drinking the water. The small amount of salt lost in sweat is adequately replaced by salting food at meals. Talk to your medical personnel concerning emergency treatment plans.

****WBGT practice guidelines and limitations do not apply to UIL competitions, but we will continuously monitor the WBGT prior to, and during competitions.**

*****See chart on next page for specific actions in extreme heat conditions.**



EXTREME HEAT POLICY

Based on Korey Stringer Institute Recommendations for Category 3.

**Values in the chart are WBGT measurements (not temperature or heat index measurements).*

WBGT RANGE	GUIDELINES
< 82	• Provide at least 3 separate rest breaks each hour with a minimum duration of 3 minutes each during the workout. - Monitor for heat-related medical emergencies. - Full practice gear is permitted.
82.0 - 86.9 MANDATORY ONSITE RAPID COOLING ZONE (INCLUDING TUB OR TARP)	• Use discretion for intense or prolonged exercise. • Provide at least 3 separate rest breaks each hour with a minimum duration of 4 minutes each during the workout. • Full practice gear is permitted.
87.0 - 90.0 MANDATORY ONSITE RAPID COOLING ZONE (INCLUDING TUB OR TARP)	• Maximum outdoor practice time is 2 hours. • Football: Players restricted to helmet, shoulder pads and shorts. • If WBGT rises to this level during practice, players may continue to work out wearing football pants without changing into shorts. Removal of helmets and shoulder pads required. • All Sports: Provide at least 4 separate rest breaks each hour with a minimum duration of 4 minutes each during the workout. • Conditioning: Remove helmets/shoulder pads.
90.1 - 92.0 MANDATORY ONSITE RAPID COOLING ZONE (INCLUDING TUB OR TARP)	• Maximum outdoor time is 1 hour for: Football: No protective equipment may be worn. • If WBGT rises to this level during practice, players may continue to work out wearing football pants without changing into shorts. Removal of helmets and shoulder pads required. • All Sports: Provide at least 20 minutes of rest breaks distributed throughout the hour of practice. Recommend water breaks every 20 minutes for no less than 10 minutes. • No outdoor conditioning at any level.
≥ 92.1 (WBGT)	No outdoor workouts. Delay practice until a cooler WBGT is reached.



FAQ'S

What counts as practice? Practices are timed from when students report to the outside practice/workout area until the students leave the area.

What if the WBGT goes up a level during practice? You must modify your practice to match the activity guidelines of the current WBGT.

What if the WBGT goes down a level during practice? You must remain at the level that you began practicing. You can NOT add shoulder pads to a practice if you began without them.

Do water breaks count toward the listed outdoor practice time? Yes. For example, on level 3 you are allowed a maximum of 2 hours for practice. This would break down to 40 minutes of water breaks and 80 minutes of practice.

If we get a text at 2pm that says 92- No outdoor workouts but when I open the app to check at 2:15pm it says WBGT is 90... are we allowed to practice? Athletic trainers will do a real time assessment of what the WBGT is 15 minutes prior to practice starting. That will be what the practice level is based on.

What modifications could be made for competitions? Working jointly, campus head trainers and district administrators will provide gameday changes. See the [UIL website](#) for a list of possible modifications.