

DONALD J. DOUGLAS
Executive Director
Public Schools Athletic League

44-36 Vernon Blvd
Long Island City, NY 11101

Telephone: 718-707-4200
Fax: 718-707-4204
Email: DDougla@schools.nyc.gov

MEMORANDUM

TO: ATHLETIC DIRECTORS, COACHES

FROM: Donald J. Douglas

DATE: February 27, 2015

SUBJECT: PSAL Cold Weather Policy

Introduction

Cold weather exposure for student athletes can impair performance, cause injury and even become life-threatening. Conditions created by cold exposure include frostnip, frostbite, and hypothermia.

Frostnip is a mild form of frostbite. The skin turns pale or red and feels very cold. Frostbite is the freezing of superficial tissues, usually of the face, ears, fingers, and toes. Frostbite can lead to permanent damage of the affected tissues.

Hypothermia is a potentially dangerous drop in body temperature. Normal body temperature averages 98.6F. With hypothermia the body temperature drops below 95F. Hypothermia frequently occurs at temperatures above freezing. A wet and windy 30-50F exposure may be as serious as a subzero exposure.

Cold policy takes into account the wind chill factor and the ambient temperature. Wind speed interacts with ambient temperature to significantly increase body cooling. When the body and clothing are wet (whether from sweat, rain, snow, or immersion), the cooling of the body is even more pronounced due to evaporation of the water held close to the skin by the wet clothing.

Clothing is one of the most important parts of keeping the athlete's body warm. Athletes should dress in layers and should try to stay dry. Layers can be added or removed depending on temperature, activity and wind chill. Athletes should layer themselves with a wicking fabric (polyester or polypropylene) next to the body, followed by a fleece or wool layer for warmth. Athletes should also use a wind block garment to avoid wind chill during workouts. The head and neck and all parts of the extremities should be covered during cold conditions.

Recognition of possible or pending cold injury:

- Shivering (a means for the body to generate heat)
- Exposed skin turns pale or red and feels very cold
- Numbness and pain in face, ears, fingers and toes
- Drop in core temperature (hypothermia) leading to sluggishness, slowed speech, confusion, and/or loss of coordination.

High School Athletic Cold Policy: PSAL Practice Policy

1. Temperatures of 33F-35F and/or Wind Chill Factor of 33F-35F with precipitation:
 - 35 minutes of exposure followed by 20 minutes inside gym (may return outside after 20 minutes)
 - Dry clothing (socks, gloves)
 - Athletes must be dressed in warm-ups with extremities covered
2. Temperature of 31F-32F and/or Wind Chill Factor of 31F-32F (DRY):
 - 45 minutes exposure followed by 15 minutes inside gym (may return outside after 15 minutes)
 - Athletes must be in warm-ups with extremities covered
3. Temperatures of 32F and/or Wind Chill Factor of 32F with precipitation:
 - All practices will be inside
 - No outside exposure
4. Temperature of 26F-30F and/or Wind Chill Factor of 26F-30F (Dry):
 - 30 minutes of total exposure
 - Athletes must be in warm-ups with extremities covered
5. Temperature of 25F or lower and/or Wind Chill Factor of 25F or lower:
 - All practices will be inside
 - No outside exposure

High School Athletic Cold Policy for all PSAL Games

1. The home team coach will decide whether to call a game due to inclement weather by 1:00pm on game day.
2. **PSAL contests with more than 2 schools competing (Cross Country, Outdoor Track), the PSAL Commissioner/Coordinator will decide whether to call a game due to inclement weather on the day of the contest.**
3. **All games will be cancelled if the temperature or wind chill is below 32 degrees**

Game day:

- Game field must be clear of ice at the time of the event
- Clothing recommendation: change wet clothing during halftime (i.e.: socks, gloves, t-shirts).

Cold Policy – Practice and Travel:

School Day Cancellation – full day:

- No travel or practice unless approved by the Athletic Director or Principal.

School Day Early Dismissal – deteriorating weather conditions

- No travel or practice unless approved by the Athletic Director or Principal.
- If approved, practices should be over by 5:00pm

Chain of Command: The following chain of command will occur

1. Notification of temperature

- School Athletic Director will obtain weather report from either www.weather.com or www.wunderground.com at 12:30pm for afternoon practices and outdoor competitions.
- The weather report will be given to the Head Coach by 1:00pm.
- The temperature of the day will dictate which protocol will be followed.
- Daily temperature reports will be on file in the Athletic Director's office.

2. Enforcement of Policies

- Head Coach will monitor time of exposure
- Athletic Director will be responsible for all coaches following protocol