Shasta Union High School District

Weather Safety Guidelines

Extreme Weather, Heat Illness Prevention, Air Quality, Lightning, and Sun Safety

Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide consistent districtwide safety procedures to protect students during outdoor physical activities and school-sponsored activities when extreme weather or environmental conditions may pose a risk to students' health or safety.

These guidelines support Board Policy 5141.75: Weather Safety and address extreme heat, poor air quality, wildfire smoke, excessive precipitation, flooding, lightning, high winds, sun exposure, and other severe weather or environmental conditions.

SUHSD maintains weather stations at district school sites. These stations are used to monitor weather conditions, including Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) and lightning activity. The stations can also send text alerts to designated administrators and in-season coaches. Alert recipient lists shall be updated season by season so that the appropriate coaches and site personnel receive timely information and can make informed safety decisions regarding weather, heat, and lightning.

SUHSD also follows Shasta County air quality guidance and Air Quality Index (AQI) resources when wildfire smoke or other extreme air quality conditions may affect athletics or other outdoor student activities.

1. Activities Covered

- Physical education classes
- Outdoor instructional activities
- Athletic practices and contests
- Marching band, cheer, dance, and other outdoor performance activities
- Outdoor student events
- Outdoor supervision periods when applicable
- Field-based or campus-based activities involving physical exertion

For interscholastic athletics governed by the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF), SUHSD shall follow applicable CIF requirements. When SUHSD guidelines provide additional safety protections, district staff may apply the more protective standard.

2. General Decision-Making Standard

When weather or environmental conditions create a potential safety concern, site administrators, athletic directors, physical education teachers, coaches, activity supervisors, or district administrators shall determine whether the activity should continue as scheduled or be modified.

Possible actions include increased monitoring, increased hydration breaks, increased rest periods, reduced intensity, shortened activity, modified equipment or protective gear, moving to shade, moving indoors, delaying, rescheduling, or canceling.

Decisions should consider current and forecasted conditions, the intensity and duration of activity, student age and acclimatization, access to shade/water/cooling, student health needs, and the availability of indoor alternatives.

3. Extreme Heat and WBGT Protocols

WBGT shall be used as the primary measure for heat-related outdoor activity decisions when heat is a concern. WBGT accounts for temperature, humidity, wind speed, sun angle, and cloud cover/solar radiation, making it more appropriate than air temperature alone for physical activity in direct sunlight.

SUHSD shall use the CIF Region Category 3 WBGT activity thresholds for outdoor athletics and other strenuous outdoor activities because Redding/Shasta County aligns with the Category 3 heat region. Staff should use the site-based weather station reading for the activity location when available.

SUHSD/CIF Category 3 WBGT Activity Cutoffs

WBGT Reading	Activity Level	Required Safety Response
< 82.0°F	Lower Risk / Normal Activities	Normal activities may continue. Provide at least 3 separate rest breaks per hour, each lasting at least 3 minutes during the workout. Continue routine monitoring, water access, and student check-ins.
82.2°F - 86.9°F	Caution	Use discretion for intense or prolonged exercise. Watch at-risk students carefully. Provide at least 3 separate rest breaks per hour, each lasting at least 4 minutes. Increase monitoring and hydration.
87.1°F - 90.0°F	Increased Caution	Maximum outdoor practice/activity time is 2 hours. Provide at least 4 separate rest breaks per hour, each lasting at least 4 minutes. Consider early morning or later-day activity. For football/field hockey, players are restricted to helmet, shoulder pads, and shorts during practice. If the WBGT reaches this level during practice, players may continue wearing full pads without changing into shorts.
90.1°F - 91.9°F	Extreme Caution	Contests are permitted with additional hydration breaks. Maximum outdoor practice/activity time is 1 hour. No protective equipment may be worn during practice, and there may be no conditioning activities. Provide 20-minute rest breaks distributed throughout the hour-long practice.
>= 92.1°F	Danger / Stop Outdoor Activity	No outdoor workouts or contests. Delay practice or competition until a cooler WBGT reading is reached; move indoors if safe and appropriate; reschedule or cancel.

Note: These thresholds are based on the CIF Category 3 WBGT chart provided in the CIF heat illness guidance. These are the district-facing cutoffs coaches and activity supervisors should use for outdoor athletics and other strenuous outdoor activities unless a more protective standard is directed by CIF, district administration, or site administration.

WBGT Monitoring and Alerts

- Use site weather stations to monitor WBGT before and during outdoor activity when heat is a concern.
- Monitor changing conditions during practices, contests, and outdoor school activities.

- Use the weather station text alert capability to notify designated administrators and in-season coaches of heat or lightning conditions that require attention.
- Update alert recipient lists season by season so that only the appropriate current coaches and staff receive timely alerts for the activities they supervise.
- When alerts are received, administrators, athletic directors, coaches, and activity supervisors shall evaluate the conditions and take appropriate action in accordance with these guidelines.

Heat Illness Prevention Expectations

- Ensure water is available, and encourage students to drink regularly.
- Schedule rest breaks appropriate to the heat condition.
- Provide access to shade or cooler areas when feasible.
- Monitor students for signs of dehydration or heat illness.
- Reduce intensity as conditions worsen.
- Modify equipment or clothing requirements when appropriate.
- Avoid unnecessary conditioning during periods of elevated heat.
- Be prepared to activate the site emergency action plan.

Heat Acclimatization

For outdoor activities, particularly fall athletics and other activities beginning during periods of high heat, staff shall support gradual heat acclimatization through gradual increases in activity intensity and duration, hydration education, practice scheduling during cooler parts of the day when possible, close health monitoring, and adjustments for students who join late, return from illness, or are not acclimated.

For fall outdoor sports, CIF guidance requires a five-day acclimatization period, with no more than one on-field practice per day and a maximum of two hours for on-field practices during that period. Football protective equipment restrictions shall be followed consistent with CIF requirements.

Emergency Cooling Readiness and Mitigation Resources

Sites shall maintain reasonable access to cooling resources during heat-risk periods and shall identify the location of those resources before practices, contests, or events begin.

- Water and hydration access
- Shade structures or shaded areas
- Indoor cooling areas
- Ice towels, ice bags, cold water, or equivalent rapid-cooling resources
- Access to athletic training room, health office, or other designated cooling location when available
- Whole-body cooling method when required or feasible for exertional heat illness response
- Large cooling fans with misters available at all stadium facilities

4. Heat Illness Recognition and Response

Staff supervising physical activity shall monitor students for signs of dehydration, heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and exertional heat stroke. Students showing signs of distress shall be removed from activity, moved to shade or a cooler/air-conditioned space when available, and provided appropriate first aid. Emergency medical services shall be activated when symptoms are severe, worsening, or not improving rapidly.

Condition	Possible Signs	Immediate Response
Dehydration	Dry mouth, thirst, irritability, headache, dizziness, cramps, excessive fatigue, reduced performance, or inability to continue at normal effort.	Move to shade or air conditioning; provide fluids when appropriate; continue monitoring.

Condition	Possible Signs	Immediate Response
Heat Cramps	Intense muscle pain or persistent muscle contractions during or after exercise.	Stop activity; rest; support hydration; provide light stretching and/or massage as appropriate; seek medical assistance if symptoms persist.
Heat Exhaustion	Difficulty continuing, loss of coordination, dizziness/fainting, profuse sweating or pale skin, headache, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, persistent cramps, weakness, or unusual fatigue.	Move to shade or air conditioning; remove extra clothing/equipment; begin cooling with cold water, fans, ice towels, or equivalent; contact the health office/site administrator; seek emergency care if there is little or no rapid improvement.
Exertional Heat Stroke	Altered consciousness, confusion, irrational behavior, seizure, collapse, very high body temperature, hot wet/dry skin, combativeness, severe weakness, or disorientation.	Medical emergency. Call 911 immediately. Begin aggressive cooling while awaiting emergency response. Do not delay cooling.

5. Air Quality and Wildfire Smoke Protocols

When wildfire smoke, poor air quality, visible ash, or other air quality concerns are present or forecasted, site or district staff shall monitor AQI using Shasta County Air Quality Management District resources, AirNow, the AirNow Fire and Smoke Map, and/or other district-approved resources. SUHSD shall use the Shasta County school activity recommendations below for athletics and other outdoor student activities during periods of smoke or poor air quality.

The Shasta County Air Quality Management District webpage provides links to the Current Air Quality Map, Current Air Quality Table, AirNow Fire and Smoke Map, and Wildfire Smoke Information. The Shasta County AQI school guidance directs school districts and charter schools to make decisions based on air quality measurements and local conditions, including indoor air filtration and direct observation of onsite indoor/outdoor air quality.

Shasta County AQI Activity Cutoffs for Schools and Athletics

Activity	AQI 0-50 Level 1	AQI 51-100 Level 2	AQI 101-150 Level 3	AQI 151-200 Level 4	AQI 201+ Level 5
Recess / short outdoor activity	No restrictions.	Ensure sensitive individuals are medically managing their condition.	Sensitive individuals should exercise indoors or avoid vigorous outdoor activities.	Exercise indoors or avoid vigorous outdoor activities. Sensitive individuals should remain indoors.	No outdoor activity. All activities should be moved indoors.
P.E. / one-hour outdoor physical activity	No restrictions.	Ensure sensitive individuals are medically managing their condition.	Sensitive individuals should exercise indoors or avoid vigorous outdoor activities.	Exercise indoors or limit vigorous outdoor activity to 15 minutes. Sensitive individuals should remain indoors.	No outdoor activity. All activities should be moved indoors.
Athletic practice & training / 2-4 hours	No restrictions.	Ensure sensitive individuals are medically managing their condition.	Reduce vigorous exercise to 30 minutes per hour of practice time with increased rest breaks and substitutions. Ensure sensitive individuals are medically managing their condition.	Exercise indoors or reduce vigorous exercise to 30 minutes of practice time with increased rest breaks and substitutions. Sensitive individuals should remain indoors.	No outdoor activity. All activities should be moved indoors.
Scheduled sporting event	No restrictions.	Ensure sensitive individuals are medically managing their condition.	Increase rest breaks and substitutions per CIF guidelines for extreme heat. Ensure sensitive individuals are medically managing their condition.	Increase rest breaks and substitutions per CIF guidelines for extreme heat. Ensure sensitive individuals are medically managing their condition.	Event must be rescheduled or relocated.

Sensitive individuals include students with asthma or other heart/lung conditions. At AQI 201+, school districts may consider school closures based on site-by-site concerns. Staff shall also consider local conditions, including smoke visibility, wind patterns, building filtration, and direct observation of onsite conditions.

Air Quality Monitoring and Action Steps

- Check Shasta County AQMD and AirNow/AirNow Fire and Smoke Map resources during wildfire smoke or poor air quality conditions.
- Use the table above to determine whether activity may continue, must be modified, should move indoors, or must be rescheduled/relocated.
- Consider local site conditions, including visible smoke/ash, wind patterns, indoor air quality, available filtration, and students' health needs.
- Provide additional monitoring and accommodations for students with asthma, respiratory conditions, cardiovascular conditions, or other documented health needs.
- When AQI is above 100, all children are considered sensitive to the health effects of air pollution; consider moving exercise indoors when feasible.
- When AQI is 201 or higher, consult district administration regarding site-by-site impacts and whether broader operational changes are needed.

6. Lightning and Thunder

SUHSD site weather stations monitor lightning activity and may provide alerts to designated administrators, PE teachers, and in-season coaches. When lightning activity is detected, thunder is heard, or lightning is observed, outdoor activity shall stop immediately, and students shall be moved to a safe indoor location or appropriate shelter.

- Do not shelter under trees, near metal fencing, on open fields, near water, or near tall isolated structures.
- Coaches and activity supervisors shall respond promptly to lightning alerts and communicate with site administration as appropriate.
- Outdoor activity may resume only when conditions are determined to be safe by the site administrator, designee, athletic director, coach, or activity supervisor, consistent with district/site protocols.
- Seasonal text alert lists shall include appropriate administrators and current in-season coaches so weather and lightning alerts reach the staff supervising outdoor activities.

7. Rain, Flooding, High Winds, and Unsafe Outdoor Conditions

Outdoor activities shall be modified, moved, delayed, or canceled when excessive precipitation, flooding, mud, standing water, slippery surfaces, unsafe field conditions, high winds, blowing debris, unstable equipment, falling branches, dust, or poor visibility create a risk of injury.

- Inspect field, court, track, and performance surfaces when conditions are questionable.
- Evaluate standing water, mud, slipping hazards, visibility, equipment stability, and safe access to/from the activity area.
- Secure or avoid use of goals, tents, shade structures, signs, and equipment when wind or instability creates a hazard.
- Move indoors, use an alternate location, delay, reschedule, or cancel when conditions cannot be made reasonably safe.

8. Sun Safety and UV Protection

Students may take reasonable measures to protect themselves from sun exposure while on campus, participating in district-sponsored activities, or under district supervision.

- Wear sun-protective clothing, including hats, when appropriate.
- Wear UV-protective sunglasses outdoors.
- Use sunscreen during the school day without a physician’s note or prescription.
- Use UV-protective lip balm.

Students should be encouraged to apply sunscreen before prolonged outdoor exposure. Staff are not required to assist students in applying sunscreen. Staff are encouraged to model sun-safe practices, including use of shade, hats or protective clothing when appropriate, and avoidance of unnecessary prolonged sun exposure.

Sites shall evaluate the availability of shaded and indoor areas for outdoor activities, lunch, recreation, physical education, athletics, and school-sponsored activities. Where feasible, sites should identify shaded outdoor spaces, covered areas, indoor cooling areas, hydration locations, alternate indoor activity spaces, and areas appropriate for students with increased sensitivity to heat, sun, or air quality.

9. Communication Procedures

When outdoor activities are modified, moved, postponed, or canceled due to weather or environmental conditions, communication shall be provided to impacted individuals as appropriate.

- Site administrators
- Teachers, coaches, athletic directors, athletic trainers when available, and activity supervisors
- Students and parents/guardians
- Transportation staff

- District office staff
- Opposing schools or event partners
- Emergency or public safety contacts, if needed

For routine school-day adjustments, site-level communication may be sufficient. For broader impacts involving athletics, transportation, family schedules, or public events, sites should use appropriate communication tools such as email, phone, parent notification systems, websites, direct staff communication, athletic communication platforms, and weather-station text alerts where applicable.

10. Indoor and Alternative Activity Plans

Each school site shall identify indoor or alternative locations that may be used when outdoor activity is unsafe or inappropriate. Physical education teachers, coaches, activity supervisors, and site administrators should maintain alternative activity options to implement when outdoor activity is restricted.

- Gyms
- Multipurpose rooms
- Classrooms
- Libraries
- Cafeterias
- Weight rooms
- Covered spaces
- Other supervised indoor areas

11. Site Responsibilities

Each school site shall identify staff responsible for monitoring conditions and implementing these guidelines. Responsible staff may include the principal or designee, the athletic director, the physical education department chair, coaches, athletic trainers, when available, activity supervisors, health office staff, and district office staff, when needed.

Sites shall ensure appropriate staff know how to access site weather station data, WBGT readings, lightning alerts, AQI information, weather alerts, indoor relocation spaces, hydration resources, cooling areas, stadium cooling fans with misters, emergency action plans, and parent/guardian contact information when needed.

12. Staff Training

The district shall provide annual training or information to staff who supervise outdoor physical activities. Training should include:

- SUHSD WBGT heat guidelines and CIF cutoff numbers
- Use of weather station data and text alerts
- Lightning alert procedures
- Heat illness prevention and acclimatization expectations
- Recognition of dehydration, heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke
- Emergency response and cooling procedures
- Air quality and wildfire smoke protocols, including Shasta County AQI cutoffs
- Rain, flooding, wind, and unsafe field condition response
- Sun safety expectations
- Site-specific shade, hydration, cooling resources, and stadium fans with misters
- Communication and documentation expectations

13. Students at Increased Risk

Staff shall provide additional monitoring and reasonable modifications for students who may be more vulnerable to weather-related impacts. This may include students with asthma or respiratory conditions, cardiovascular conditions, prior heat illness, current illness, low fitness level or lack of acclimatization, disabilities, medical plans, Section 504 plans, IEP-related health considerations, or other known health concerns.

14. Coordination with Local Agencies and Resources

The district may coordinate with relevant agencies or resources to support timely weather-related decisions, including the National Weather Service, Shasta County Public Health, the Shasta County Air Quality Management District, local emergency services, the California Department of Education, the California Department of Public Health, the California Interscholastic Federation, and other local agencies or experts.

15. Documentation

When significant weather-related modifications are made, sites should document the decision. Documentation may include the date and time, the activity affected, the weather or environmental concern, the data source used, the action taken, the staff member or administrator making the decision, and the communication provided, if applicable.

16. Annual Review

The Superintendent or designee shall review these guidelines annually and update them as needed. The review should consider updated CDE, CIF, Shasta County, and public health guidance; district WBGT procedures; site weather station use; text alert effectiveness; lightning and AQI protocols; site feedback; incident reports; availability of shade, water, cooling areas, indoor spaces, and stadium cooling fans/misters; equity of mitigation resources across school sites; and changes in law, regulation, or best practice.

Appendix A: SUHSD/CIF Category 3 WBGT Quick Reference

This appendix is provided for reference and alignment with CIF guidance. SUHSD uses the Category 3 thresholds in the main body of these guidelines because Redding/Shasta County aligns with the Category 3 heat region. Coaches and activity supervisors should use the Category 3 cutoffs for district safety decisions unless CIF, district administration, or site administration directs a more protective standard.

Category 3 WBGT	Outdoor Activity Guideline
< 82.0°F	Normal activity with at least three 3-minute rest breaks per hour.
82.2°F - 86.9°F	Use discretion for intense/prolonged activity; at least three 4-minute rest breaks per hour; monitor at-risk students.
87.1°F - 90.0°F	Maximum 2 hours outdoors; at least four 4-minute rest breaks per hour; follow equipment restrictions for football/field hockey.
90.1°F - 91.9°F	Contests permitted with extra hydration breaks; maximum 1-hour practice/activity; no protective equipment or

Category 3 WBGT	Outdoor Activity Guideline
	conditioning; 20 minutes rest per hour.
>= 92.1°F	No outdoor activity. Delay, move indoors, reschedule, or cancel until a cooler WBGT reading is reached.

Appendix B: Quick Coach Reference

Before outdoor practice, contest, or strenuous activity:

- Check site WBGT/weather station data.
- Check lightning alerts/weather station notification status.
- Check Shasta County AQI/AirNow when smoke or poor air quality is present or forecasted.
- Confirm water, shade, cooling area, and emergency communication are available.
- Confirm large cooling fans with misters are available at stadium facilities when needed.
- Know the indoor/alternate activity plan.
- Monitor students throughout the activity and respond immediately to signs of distress.

Immediate stop points:

- WBGT at or above 92.1°F for Category 3: no outdoor workouts or contests; delay, move indoors, reschedule, or cancel until a cooler WBGT reading is reached.
- AQI 201 or higher: stop outdoor activity; move indoors, reschedule, or relocate scheduled sporting events.
- Thunder heard, lightning observed, or lightning alert received requiring action: stop outdoor activity and move students to safe shelter.
- Unsafe field, flooding, high winds, blowing debris, or unstable equipment: modify, move, delay, or cancel until safe.