

British Flyball Association

Adverse Weather Policy

This document outlines the BFA's official policy for managing extreme weather conditions at BFA-sanctioned Tournaments. It is designed to protect the welfare of dogs, handlers, officials, and spectators, and ensure safe tournament operations under adverse weather conditions.

Introduction:

The British Flyball Association Committee has introduced this policy to reduce the risk of extreme weather (lightning, heat etc) related injuries to competitors, dogs, judges and other officials and members of the public involved in BFA events or activities. The policy also contains several guidelines to help Head Judges and Judges in recognising and managing extreme weather.

Purpose:

To ensure the safety and welfare of dogs, handlers, officials, and spectators during adverse weather conditions, including extreme heat, cold, wind, and precipitation. This policy provides clear thresholds, responsibilities, and mitigation protocols in line with UK public health and animal welfare standards.

Policy Statement:

The British Flyball Association Committee is committed to safe and enjoyable events for all participants (including dogs) and spectators. This includes minimising risk due to adverse or extreme weather conditions.

Definitions:

Competition – BFA sanctioned Tournament

Dog – a Dog registered on BFA

Judge – Judge appointed and currently authorised to officiate at BFA events.

Owner/Handler – BFA registered owner of a Dog

Severe Weather – Includes excessive high or low temperatures, snowstorms, flooding, lightning, and high winds.

Responsibilities:

Tournament Organisers – Ensure policies reflect current recommendations for reducing and managing risks associated with weather conditions. Be aware of predicted and prevailing weather conditions in terms of pre-planning (season, date, time etc), risk assessment and competition management (protocols for heat, lightning, cancellation etc). Be prepared to implement this policy promptly when indicated. Monitor forecasts 72 hours prior and assess site conditions

Head Judges – Be aware of the prevailing weather conditions and how they may affect the handlers, their dogs and those officiating at the event and apply this Adverse Weather Policy at Competitions, when appropriate. May suspend or modify racing if safety is compromised.

Members – Be aware of the prevailing weather conditions and of this policy. Alert the Head Judge of any safety concerns or if thunder and lightning suspension criteria have been met.

BFA Committee to be consulted for borderline or disputed cases.

All BFA-sanctioned Tournaments must be assessed for risk during planning. This includes venue, activities, participants, and likely weather conditions. If the event occurs during a season of likely storm activity or high heat, these must be factored into planning and risk management. It is presumed outdoor competitions will only take place between March and September.

Summary of thresholds and actions.

Condition	Action	
1. Heat.	21–24°C with sun and low wind	Increase shade, hydration, and rest breaks. Encourage handlers to monitor dogs closely, especially brachycephalic breeds.
	25–27°C with moderate humidity or still air	Activate cooling stations (e.g. fans, misting tents), reduce race frequency, and extend recovery periods. Consider early morning or evening scheduling.
	28–30°C sustained, breeze and humidity should be taken into consideration and temperature should be taken both in the sun and in the shade for consideration	Suspend racing temporarily. Reassess hourly based on forecast and on-site conditions. Prioritise welfare over schedule.
	30°C+ with humidity >60% or strong sun exposure	Immediate suspension. Activate emergency protocols including veterinary standby, shaded evacuation zones, and hydration alerts.
2. Rain.	If there are safety concerns: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the competition/event may be discontinued for a period of up to half an hour 2. conditions are then reassessed to determine whether the competition/event should resume or be cancelled. 	
3. Hail	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cease all activities 2. Seek protective cover 3. Assess conditions when hailstorm ceases 	
4. Lightening	All outdoor activities should stop once thunder is heard. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In the event of weather tracking devices, the storm is 15 km away regardless of the timing of the thunder and lightning. 2. Once Thunder is heard and activities have ceased, Judges must wait at least 30 minutes after the last sound of thunder or observation of lightning and ensure conditions are safe before leaving shelter to resume activities. The Head Judge and Judges must concur that the 30-minute Resumption rule is applicable prior to resuming competition activities and advising members to leave shelter. 3. Each time thunder is heard the 30-minute clock should be restarted. Follow the criteria for suspension and resumption of activities without exception	
5. High Wind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Head Judges should suspend activities during severe wind gusts but may resume when conditions settle. Tents and event shelters etc: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Should be appropriately erected and tethered. ● Should be lowered or dismantled in high wind. 	
6. Snow & Freezing Conditions	Snow Accumulation	If snow depth exceeds safe footing for dogs or handlers, suspend or cancel competition. Ensure paths and competition areas are cleared and treated with pet-safe de-icing products
	Ice Formation	Cancel events if ice is present on competition surfaces or walkways to prevent slips and injuries (if pet-safe de-icing products are unavailable)
	Emergency Preparedness	Keep snow shovels, salt alternatives, and blankets readily available for a quick response. Ensure roads to and from the venue are safe for participants before allowing the event to proceed.
	Temperatures below 0°C	Provide sheltered warm-up areas, limit outdoor exposure, offer warm beverages for handlers.

7. Cold weather	Temperatures below 0°C with wind chill	Consider delaying or suspending competition. Ensure adequate heated indoor facilities are available for dogs (racing and non-racing).
	Sustained and continuous temperatures of 0°C over 3 or more days could lead to frozen ground	Competitions should be cancelled; ground thawing can take several days to a week once temperatures rise above 0°C
	Winter Storm Warning	Competition is likely to be suspended or cancelled. Focus on dog welfare and first aid for hypothermia.
8. Vehicles	Dogs in cars	<p>Heat: During periods of hot weather, vehicles should have plenty of ventilation to prevent overheating. Ensure dogs have an adequate supply of fresh water at all times. Park vehicles out of direct sunlight whenever possible. Use sunblock sheeting to cover the vehicle and reduce heat buildup.</p> <p>Cold: Care should be taken when leaving dogs in cars in excessively cold weather. Ensure dogs have good air circulation but are not left in a draft. Ensure dogs have access to plenty of warm blankets. Monitor the temperature carefully, as cars can become dangerously cold even with blankets. Avoid leaving dogs for prolonged periods and limit their time in the car to just a few minutes if possible. Check for condensation to ensure proper ventilation without creating drafts. Make sure dogs stay hydrated, as cold weather can still cause dehydration. If you'll be away for more than a few minutes, consider alternatives such as bringing your dog inside or arranging a warm space.</p>

Information

1. Heat Protocols

Thresholds & Actions

Temperature (°C)	Recommended Action
21–24°C with sun and low wind	Increase shade, hydration, and rest breaks. Encourage handlers to monitor dogs closely, especially brachycephalic breeds.
25–27°C with moderate humidity or still air	Activate cooling stations (e.g. fans, misting tents), reduce race frequency, and extend recovery periods. Consider early morning or evening scheduling.
28–30°C sustained, breeze and humidity should be taken into consideration and temperature should be taken both in the sun and in the shade for consideration	Suspend racing temporarily. Reassess hourly based on forecast and on-site conditions. Prioritise welfare over schedule.
30°C+ with humidity >60% or strong sun exposure	Immediate suspension. Activate emergency protocols including veterinary standby, shaded evacuation zones, and hydration alerts.

These thresholds support the legal duty of care outlined in the BFA Rule D.1.1 and the Animal Welfare Act 2006.

Heat stress (Dog): Associated with increased thirst and panting. The dog is mentally aware and is generally able to move about.

Heat exhaustion (People): Characterised by a high heart rate, dizziness, headache, loss of endurance/skill/ confusion and nausea. The skin may still be cool/sweating, but there will be signs of developing vasoconstriction (e.g. pale colour). **The oral temperature may reach up to 39°C and may collapse upon cessation of activity. Oral temperature readings**

should be taken using a calibrated digital thermometer and interpreted with caution, as they may underestimate core body temperature.

Heat exhaustion (Dog): A more severe form of heat stress. It is associated with a significant increase in thirst, general weakness and heavy panting. A dog can also be mentally aware but too weak or tired to react and may not be able to move around or may collapse. Other symptoms include dehydration, excessive drooling, muscle tremors, vomiting or diarrhoea, and dizziness.

Heat stroke (People): Characteristics are like heat exhaustion but with a dry skin, confusion and collapse. Heat stroke may arise in an athlete who has not been identified as suffering from heat exhaustion and has persisted in further activity.

Core temperature measured orally to determine heat stroke. This is a potentially fatal condition and must be treated immediately. It should be assumed that any collapse is at danger of heat stroke. The best first aid measures are “Strip/Soak/Fan”:

- Strip off any excess clothing;
- Soak with water;
- Fan;
- Ice placed in the groin and armpits is also helpful.

The aim is to reduce body temperature as quickly as possible. The dogs/humans should immediately be referred for treatment by a medical professional.

Important: heat exhaustion/stroke can still occur even in the presence of good hydration

Heat stroke (Dog): The most severe type of hyperthermia. It occurs when a dog’s temperature reaches 41 degrees or higher. At this temperature neurological and organ dysfunction and failure occur. Once their temperature reaches 43 degrees or higher, it melts the proteins which make up the foundation of all the cells in the body. While there is no definite point at which these systems fail, higher temperatures and longer periods of heat exposure will lead to more organ dysfunctions and possible risk of death.

Follow these steps for a dog believed to be suffering from heat stroke and showing any of the above signs or symptoms:

- Remove your dog from the hot environment
- Gradually lower your dog’s body temperature by wetting them down with a hose or bucket (avoiding their face), a fan blowing over damp skin will help in evaporative cooling. Do not wrap a wet towel around them as it will trap the heat trying to escape
- rapid cooling in cool water immersion. Ice packs in armpits and groins can also help cool, just like in humans
- Wetting down the areas around your dog can also help in lowering the ambient temperature
- Offer water. See a vet immediately. Even if a dog looks to be recovering or you only suspect they have heat stroke, it is important to see a vet.

Dogs exhibiting signs of heat stroke may be excluded from competition under Rule D.2.1 to safeguard welfare.

Dehydration (People): Dehydration is fluid loss which occurs during exercise, mainly due to perspiration and respiration. It makes an athlete more susceptible to fatigue and muscle cramps. Inadequate fluid replacement before, during and after exercise will lead to excessive dehydration and may lead to heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

To avoid dehydration, NHS Heatwave Plan for England recommends that:

- People drink approximately 500mls (2 glasses) in the 2 hours prior to exercise.
- During exercise longer than 60 minutes, 2-3 cups (500 – 700 ml) of cool water or sports drink are sufficient for most sports.
- After exercise Handlers and Judges should replenish fluid deficit to ensure they are fully rehydrated, but not over-hydrated.

Heat and Sun - Event scheduling

Wherever possible, events are to be scheduled to avoid hot conditions. Events scheduled during summer should be conducted in the early morning and/or late afternoon and evening, subject to the type of event, location and venue.

Competitions are to be cancelled or postponed or, if appropriate, commencement of racing delayed if the highest combined Air Temperature and Relative Humidity as forecast UK Met Office from 2 hours before start of racing for the next 8 hours; or

The decision to postpone commencement of racing should be undertaken by the officiating Head Judge(s). Consideration should be given to scheduled start time (e.g. can this be adjusted by an hour or two), expected duration of the competition and expected finish time.

Sun Protection

- It is recommended that all participants and officials in the sun always wear hats and sunscreen (minimum SPF 30+).
- Judges and ring parties should use sunscreen for their divisions. If outside for extended periods sunscreen should be re-applied at a minimum of every 2 hours.
- It should be noted that sunscreen does not offer complete protection against the sun and should always be used in conjunction with other protective measures.
- Shade should be provided for the ring party.
- A ready supply of drinking water must be available to all Officiating Judges and Ring Parties.
- Participants and spectators are encouraged to stay in naturally shaded areas when they are not actively required to be in the direct sun.
- Participants and officials are also encouraged to use other artificial means of shade such as umbrellas and cabanas and other on-field structures during waiting times etc.
- Provision of sunscreen and water refill stations should be included in the Tournament Organiser’s risk assessment, as outlined in Appendix A.

Care of dogs in the heat and sun

- Comfort and safety of dogs is always paramount.
- Dogs should, preferably, be kept in naturally shaded areas.
- When natural shade is not readily available, safe artificial shade must be provided.
- Dogs should only be in on field for as short a time as possible-and then should be taken back to a shaded area immediately after the run.
- All dogs must have ready access to fresh cool water.
- Clubs are also encouraged to provide shaded wading pools and/or spray hoses for cooling dogs.
- The use of cool mats, coats, crate fans etc is at the discretion of the owner.

Mitigating Heat Stress Risk

Use: Welfare Monitoring & Risk Assessment Source: UK Met Office & BFA Operational Standards

Air Temp (°C)	Typical Relative Humidity (%)	Perceived Conditions	Operational Guidance
10-15	75-90%	Cool, damp	Low heat risk; monitor for wet ground or chill
16-20	70-85%	Mild, comfortable	Ideal conditions; maintain hydration
21-24	60-80%	Warm	Begin heat monitoring; prepare shade and water
25-28	50-70%	Hot	Activate heat protocols; monitor dogs and handlers closely
29-32	40-60%	Very hot	High risk; consider schedule adjustments or suspensions
>32	<50%	Extreme heat	Suspend racing; implement full welfare mitigation

Relative Humidity (RH) affects how heat is perceived — high RH reduces cooling via evaporation.

Use this table alongside Met Office forecasts and on-site readings.

Thresholds above 24°C with RH >70% may trigger BFA heat protocols and welfare alerts.

Green – Heat stress risk is low (People)

- Maintaining hydration through regular fluid consumption and modifying clothing is still a simple, yet effective, way of keeping cool and preserving health and performance during summer months.
- Undertake pre-exercise hydration by consuming 6 ml of water per kg of body weight every 2-3 hours before exercising.
- Drink regularly throughout exercise, aiming to drink enough to offset sweat losses, but it is important to avoid over-drinking because this can also have negative health effects.

Green – Heat stress risk is low (Dogs)

- Maintaining hydration through regular fluid consumption, use of cool coats and cool beds.

Yellow – Heat stress risk is moderate (People)

- Increasing frequency and/or duration of rest breaks during exercise or sporting activities is an effective way of reducing risk for heat illness even if minimal resource is available.
- During training sessions, provide a minimum of 15 minutes of rest for every 45 minutes of practice.
- Extend scheduled rest breaks that naturally occur during the competition (e.g. course walking) by 10 minutes.
- Implement additional rest breaks that are not normally scheduled to occur.
- During all breaks in judging, everyone should seek shade if natural shade is not available, portable sun shelters should be provided, and water freely available.

Yellow – Heat stress risk is moderate (Dogs)

- Wading pool and/or tap with hose should be made available by the host club.

Orange – Heat stress risk is high (People)

- Active cooling strategies should be applied during scheduled and additional rest breaks, or before and during judging.
- Drinking cold fluids and/or ice slushies before exercise commences. Note that cold water and ice slushy ingestion during exercise is less effective for cooling.
- Submerging arms/feet in cold water.
- Water dousing – wetting your skin with cool water using a sponge or a spray bottle helps increase evaporation, which is the most effective cooling mechanism in the heat.
- Ice packs/towels – placing an ice pack or damp towel filled with crushed ice around your neck.
- Electric (misting) fans – outdoor fans can help keep your body cool, especially when combined with a water misting system.

Orange – Heat stress risk is high (Dogs)

- Wading pool placed in shade and tap with hose must be made available by the host Club.

Red – Heat stress risk is extreme (People and Dogs)

- The Competition must be suspended. If the Competition/Judging has commenced, then all activities should be stopped as soon as possible.
- All people and dogs should seek shade or cool refuge in an air-conditioned space if available.
- Active cooling strategies should be applied.

2. Rain - Dealing with Rain

If it is raining heavily, and there are safety concerns, the competition/event may be discontinued for a period of up to half an hour and then conditions reassessed to determine whether the competition/event should resume or be cancelled.

Safety concerns would include risk of slipping by handlers-in very heavy rain etc. If, in the opinion of the Head Judge, the rain fall is not a significant safety factor, then the competition/event may continue during the rain period.

Head Judges should be prepared change ring position and make other changes to accommodate the conditions including where required, obtain assistance from a more experienced Judge and the BFA Committee.

3. Hailstorms

Cease all activities

Seek protective cover

4. Lightning

- Activity breakdown: A striking 72% of lightning deaths occurred during outdoor leisure, recreation, and sports pursuits. Most fatalities occurred between May and August, when thunderstorms are more frequent
- When thunderstorms threaten, Judges (and other Officials) must not let the desire to start a competition or event hinder their judgment when the safety of competition, dogs, officials and spectators is in jeopardy.
- All thunderstorms produce lightning and are dangerous. Lightning often strikes outside the area of heavy rain.

- Any time thunder is heard, the thunderstorm is close enough to pose an immediate threat to the location.
- When thunderstorms are in the area but not overhead, the lightning threat can still exist even if it is sunny overhead and not raining or when clear sky is visible.
- Many lightning casualties occur before the thunderstorm rains have moved into the area; this is often due to people not seeking shelter soon enough.
- Many casualties also occur after the rain dissipates; this can be due to people being in too much of a hurry to go back outside to resume activities.

Safe structures and locations

No place is absolutely safe from a lightning threat however some places are safer than others.

Safe structures:

- The primary choice for a safe structure is a large, fully enclosed (plumbed) building.
- Fully enclosed stopped vehicle.
- Crouch into the smallest ball you can.
- Do not elevate yourself.
- Seek out a dry ditch, gully or depression in the ground and crouch.
- If in a group, spread the group apart.
- Non-absorbing material in footwear, plastic sheeting, sleeping mats can provide protection from earth voltages.

Unsafe locations and situations

- An open field.
- Close vicinity to the tallest structure in the area eg tree(s), light pole(s).
- Small structures such as picnic shelters, tents, equipment sheds.
- Use of indoor phones.
- Use of electrical appliances.
- Umbrellas or any object that increases a person's height.
- Exit any waterways immediately, do not enter any water bodies.
- Do not huddle together.
- Do not carry, touch, wear metal objects.

Criteria for suspension and resumption of activities

All outdoor activities should stop once thunder is heard, or in the event of weather tracking devices, the storm is 15 km away regardless of the timing of the thunder and lightning.

Resume Activities

- Once Thunder is heard and activities have ceased, Judges must wait at least 30 minutes after the last sound of thunder or observation of lightning and ensure conditions are safe before leaving shelter to resume activities. The Head Judge and Judges must concur that the 30-minute Resumption rule is applicable prior to resuming competition activities and advising members to leave shelter.
- Each time thunder is heard the 30-minute clock should be restarted.
- Follow the criteria for suspension and resumption of activities without exception

First Aid

- Lightning victims do not carry an electrical charge and are safe to handle and need immediate medical attention. Cardiac arrest is the immediate cause of death in lightning fatalities. Some deaths can be prevented if the victim receives the proper first aid:
 1. Call an ambulance immediately.
 2. Check the victim's pulse and breathing, begin CPR if necessary; and
 3. If possible, move the victim to a safer place. Be aware that the thunderstorm may still be dangerous. Don't let the rescuers become victims.
- Thunderstorms can be very serious for people with asthma. Thunderstorm asthma events are believed to be triggered by an uncommon combination of high grass pollen levels and a certain type of thunderstorm, causing pollen grains from grasses to be swept up in the wind and carried long distances. The UKHSA, Met Office and Defra issue warnings when such events are likely to occur.

Judges must document all lightning- related suspensions and resumption in accordance with the BFA incident reporting procedures (Rules B.2.2.2 and A.3.2).

5. **High Wind - Dealing with High Wind**

Tents and event shelters etc:

- Should be appropriately erected and tethered.
- Should be lowered or dismantled in high wind.

Equipment safety

- Head Judges and Tournament Organisers should be mindful that equipment does not pose a danger to the Dog, Handler, Judges etc during wind gusts.
- Consideration also needs to be given for Dogs’ safety when racing, particularly when there are cross winds or wind gusts.

Decisions to suspend or cancel competitions or events due to high winds

Head Judges should suspend activities during severe wind gusts but may resume when conditions settle.

6. **Cold Weather Protocol**

Applies to events held between **1 November and 31 March**, or during unseasonably cold conditions.

Condition	Action
Temperatures below 0°C	Provide sheltered warm-up areas, limit outdoor exposure, offer warm beverages for handlers.
Temperatures below 0°C with wind chill	Consider delaying or suspending competition. Ensure adequate heated indoor facilities are available for dogs (racing and non-racing).
Sustained and continuous temperatures of 0°C over 3 or more days could lead to frozen ground	Competitions should be cancelled; ground thawing can take several days to a week assuming temperatures are consistently above 50°C
Winter Storm Warning	Competition is likely to be suspended or cancelled. Focus on dog welfare and first aid for hypothermia.
Winter Storm Warning	Competition is likely to be suspended or cancelled. Focus on dog welfare and first aid for hypothermia.
Snow Accumulation	If snow depth exceeds safe footing for dogs or handlers, suspend or cancel competition. Ensure paths and competition areas are cleared and treated with pet-safe de-icing products
Ice Formation	Cancel events if ice is present on competition surfaces or walkways to prevent slips and injuries (pet-safe de-icing products are unavailable)
Emergency Preparedness	Keep snow shovels, salt alternatives, and blankets readily available for a quick response. Ensure roads to and from the venue are safe for participants before allowing the event to proceed.
Dogs in cars	Care should be taken when leaving dogs in cars in excessively cold weather. Ensure dogs have good air circulation but are not left in a draft. Ensure dogs have access to plenty of warm blankets.

Risk Thresholds

- Ambient temperature below **0°C** for ≥3 hours
- Wind chill below **-2°C**
- Frozen ground or icy surfaces creating slip hazards
- Met Office Yellow/Amber/Red Cold Weather Alerts

Mitigation Measures

- Heated rest areas or insulated shelters for dogs
- Non-slip matting in racing lanes and holding areas
- Extended warm-up periods and optional race format adjustments
- Use of blankets, coats, and paw protection between races

Hypothermia in dogs: a serious condition that occurs when their core body temperature drops below normal — typically below 37°C (99°F). It can develop quickly in cold, wet, or windy conditions, especially during winter tournaments or travel.

Risk Factors

- Small, short-coated, elderly, or very young dogs
- Wet fur combined with cold air or wind chill
- Prolonged exposure to freezing temperatures
- Inadequate shelter or rest areas at events

Stages & Symptoms (Hypothermia)

Stage	Body Temp Range	Symptoms
Mild	32–35°C	Shivering, lethargy, cold ears/paws, seeking warmth
Moderate	28–32°C	Muscle stiffness, confusion, slowed heart rate, difficulty walking
Severe	Below 28°C	Collapse, shallow breathing, unconsciousness — veterinary emergency

Immediate Actions

- Move dog to a warm, dry, sheltered area
- Wrap in thermal blankets or towels
- Use warm (not hot) water bottles wrapped in cloth near the body
- Avoid vigorous rubbing — it can damage cold tissues
- Seek veterinary care immediately for moderate/severe cases

Prevention at Events

- Provide heated rest zones or insulated crates
- Use dog coats and paw protection between races
- Limit exposure time in cold/wet conditions
- Dry dogs thoroughly if they get wet
- Monitor vulnerable dogs closely (e.g., toy breeds, seniors)

Cancelled Competition/Event

Travelling Home from a Cancelled Competition/Event

When a competition is cancelled due to extreme weather, the road conditions are likely to be hazardous. All competitors, officials, spectators etc should take extreme caution.

Events may be cancelled if:

- Travel advisories are issued
- Site conditions are unsafe
- Welfare risks cannot be mitigated

Organisers must notify participants **at least 24 hours prior** to the scheduled start time, offering refunds or rescheduling options.

Common wording currently used by Tournament Organisers within the Association can be found below:

“If circumstances make it necessary to cancel the tournament, the organisers reserve the right to defray expenses incurred by deducting such expenses from the entry fees received.”

It is not acceptable to state that no refunds will be given.

Communication

Cold weather contingency plans must be included in pre-event briefings and shared via BFA-approved channels (email, social media, WhatsApp).

Organisers must follow local authority guidance and consult the BFA Committee. Events may be suspended or cancelled if conditions pose immediate risk.

BFA Adverse Weather Policy

Summary for Tournament Organisers

Purpose: To ensure the safety of all participants and dogs during extreme weather at BFA-sanctioned Tournaments be they indoors or outdoors.

Key Responsibilities: Tournament Organisers must assess weather risks during planning and monitor conditions throughout the event.

Judges authorised by BFA must suspend play if lightning or hail is observed, or if heat thresholds are exceeded.

Handlers must ensure dogs are protected from heat, cold, and other weather extremes.

Weather Thresholds:

Heat: If UK Met Office forecasts fall into the Extreme (Red) Zone for temperature/humidity, the tournament must be suspended.

Lightning: Suspend racing if thunder is heard or lightning is observed within 15 km. Resume only after 30 minutes without further activity.

Hail/High Wind: Cease activities immediately and reassess safety.

Snow/Ice: Suspend or cancel if surfaces are unsafe and cannot be made safe. Cancel event if travel conditions pose a risk. Ensure roads to and from the venue are safe for participants before allowing the event to proceed.

Required Provisions:

- Shade and hydration for dogs and officials
- Access to shelter during storms
- Ventilation and air conditioning (where possible) in hot conditions
- Heated areas during cold weather

Escalation Protocol:

- Decisions made jointly by Head Judges and Judges
- Notify participants promptly of delays or cancellations
- Document all decisions and weather-related incidents

Resources:

- UK Met Office: www.metoffice.gov.uk
- UK Health and Safety Executive (HSE): www.hse.gov.uk

Appendix A: UK Met Office Weather Alert System

The British Flyball Association recognises the UK Met Office's National Severe Weather Warning Service as the standard for assessing and responding to adverse weather conditions. Tournament Organisers and Head Judges should refer to these alerts when making decisions about event safety.

Weather Warning Levels

Colour Level	Meaning	Impact	Recommended Action
■ Yellow	Be aware	Low to medium disruption possible	Stay informed. Monitor conditions and plan ahead.
■ Amber	Be prepared	Medium to high disruption likely	Prepare for delays, cancellations, and safety risks.
● Red	Take action	High risk to life and property	Follow emergency instructions. Cancel or suspend events immediately.

Application to BFA Tournaments

- **Yellow:** Proceed with caution. Increase hydration and shade provisions.
- **Amber:** Consider delaying or modifying the Tournament schedule. Monitor dogs and handlers closely.
- **Red:** Suspend or cancel the Tournament. Ensure all participants are safely sheltered.

Warnings are based on a matrix of **likelihood** and **impact** and may be issued up to 7 days in advance. Always consult the latest updates via www.metoffice.gov.uk.

Appendix B: UK Lightning Safety Guidelines

Lightning strikes the ground in Britain approximately **300,000 times per year**, with **30–60 people struck annually**. Around **5–10% of these incidents are fatal**, making lightning a serious but manageable risk for outdoor events.

Types of Lightning Strikes

- **Direct Strike** – Lightning hits the individual directly.
- **Side Flash** – Lightning strikes a nearby object and jumps to the person.
- **Ground Strike** – Lightning hits the ground and travels through it to the person.

Flash-to-Bang Principle

To estimate how far away lightning is:

- Count the seconds between the flash and the thunder.
- Divide by 3 to get the distance in kilometres.
- If thunder occurs within **30 seconds** of the flash, lightning is within **10 km** — suspend all outdoor activity.

Safety Protocols for BFA Events

- Suspend play immediately if lightning is observed or thunder is heard within 15 km.
- Resume only after **30 minutes** have passed since the last thunder or lightning.
- Ensure all participants seek shelter in enclosed buildings or vehicles.
- Avoid open fields, tall, isolated trees, metal structures, and water bodies.
- Do not use wired electronics, plumbing fixtures, or landline phones during a storm.

Shelter Guidelines

- **Safe:** Fully enclosed buildings with plumbing and wiring, hard-topped vehicles.
- **Unsafe:** Tents, gazebos, open shelters, under trees, near fences or poles.

Event Organiser Responsibilities

- Monitor weather forecasts via the UK Met Office.
- Communicate suspension protocols clearly to all participants.
- Document any lightning-related delays or incidents.
- Include lightning safety in pre-event briefings and risk assessments.

BFA Adverse Weather Checklist for Tournament Organisers

HEAT PROTOCOLS

Trigger: Forecast or observed temperature $\geq 24^{\circ}\text{C}$

- Monitor UK Met Office forecasts and real-time conditions
- Implement shade structures and hydration stations
- Communicate heat alerts to competitors and officials
- Reference *Rule D.1.1* and Animal Welfare Act 2006
- Exclude dogs showing signs of heat stroke (*Rule D.2.1*)

LIGHTNING & THUNDERSTORM PROTOCOL

Trigger: Lightning within 15 km radius

- Suspend racing immediately
- Resume only after 30 minutes with no strikes
- Document delays per *Rules B.2.2.2* and *A.3.2*
- Consult BFA Judges Board if escalation is needed

HIGH WIND, RAIN, OR HAIL

Trigger: Unsafe ring or equipment conditions

- Assess risk to dogs, handlers, and equipment
- Suspend or delay racing as needed
- Invoke Withdrawal from Competition (*Rule A.3.12*) if conditions persist

SNOW & ICE PROTOCOL

Trigger: Accumulation of snow or ice on surfaces or unsafe travel conditions

- Cancel or suspend racing if footing is compromised
- Ensure safe access routes for vehicles and participants before proceeding
- Clear and treat competition areas with pet-safe de-icing products
- Include snow/ice hazards in risk assessment and document actions taken (*Appendix A*)

DOG WELFARE MONITORING

- Watch for signs of heat stress, exhaustion, or dehydration
- Ensure access to cool water and shaded rest areas
- Enforce exclusion if welfare is compromised (*Rule D.2.1*)

SUN PROTECTION & HYDRATION

- Provide SPF 30+ sunscreen access
- Ensure water stations are stocked and accessible
- Include these provisions in your risk assessment (*Appendix A*)

RISK ASSESSMENT & DOCUMENTATION

- Complete weather-related risk matrix before event
- Use BFA templates for hazard identification
- Include mitigation actions for all extreme weather scenarios

British Flyball Association (BFA) Risk Assessment Template

Event Details Field	Entry (type directly below each field)
Event Name	
Date of Tournament	
Location	
Head Judge(s)	

General Event Risk Assessment

Hazard	Who Might Be Harmed	Risk Level	Control Measures	Further Action Needed
Slips, trips, and falls	Handlers, dogs, officials	<input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> High	Clear walkways, secure cables, dry surfaces	
Equipment malfunction	Dogs, handlers, judges, light co-ordinators	<input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> High	Pre-event inspection, backup equipment available	
Dog aggression	Other dogs, handlers	<input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> High	Separation protocols, handler briefings	

Adverse Weather Risk Assessment

Weather Condition	Risk Level	Control Measures	Decision Thresholds
Heat and sun	<input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> High	Shade structures, water refill points/dog hydration areas, SPF 30+ sunscreen, cooling pools for dogs	Suspend if Met Office Red Zone forecast
Cold Weather	<input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> High	Warm-up areas, protective gear, shortened ring time	Postpone if freezing conditions persist
Lightning	<input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> High	Monitor flash-to-bang timing, suspend play if thunder/lightning within 15 km	Resume after 30 minutes without activity
Hailstorms	<input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> High	Immediate suspension, seek shelter in vehicles or buildings	Resume after storm passes and safety confirmed
High Wind	<input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> High	Secure tents and equipment, suspend judging during gusts	Cancel if sustained unsafe conditions persist
Heavy Rain	<input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> High	Modify ring layout, monitor ground conditions	Suspend if flooding or visibility compromised
Ice/Snow	<input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> High	Immediate suspension, should temperatures fall below -5° seek shelter in warm vehicles or buildings. Surfaces become too slippery.	Resume if temperatures significantly rise and safety confirmed

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Tournament Manager	Oversee implementation of safety protocols, communicate decisions to participants
Judge(s)	Monitor weather, enforce suspensions, assess ring safety
Handlers	Monitor dogs for stress, comply with weather-related instructions
Club Officials	Provide shelter, hydration, and emergency support

Emergency Contacts

Contact Type	Details (type below each field)
Local Emergency Services	
Nearest Hospital/Vet	
Met Office Alerts	www.metoffice.gov.uk
BFA Governance Contact	

Review and Sign-Off

Role	Name	Signature (type name or insert digital signature)	Date
Tournament Organiser			
Judge Authorised by BFA			