

GRANT COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

ATHLETIC COLD WEATHER PREVENTION GUIDELINES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Exposure to cold weather during athletics cannot only be uncomfortable for athletes, but can potentially impair performance and even become life threatening. Conditions created by cold exposure include frostbite and hypothermia. Wind chill, which is the perceived decrease in air temperature felt by the body on exposed skin due to the flow of air, can impair performance when muscle temperature declines. When temperature or wind-chill reaches 25 degrees, frostbite can occur within 30 minutes or less. Hypothermia frequently occurs at temperatures above freezing. A wet and windy 30-50 degree day of exposure may be as serious as a subzero temperature.

COLD WEATHER GUIDELINES AND INFORMATION

- Athletes should dress in layers to stay dry and warm.
- Layers can be added or removed depending on temperature, activity and wind chill.
- Athletes should use a wind block garment to avoid wind chill during workouts.
- Heat loss from the head and neck may be as much as 50% of total heat loss, therefore the head and neck should be covered with a hat and extremities should be covered as well.
- Encourage athletes to be properly hydrated and maintain proper nutrition.
- Ensure that athletes and coaches know the signs and symptoms of cold injury.
- Encourage proper conditioning and appropriate clothing
- Identify participants at risk for cold injury. Risk factors include the following:
 - Lean body composition
 - Females
 - Lower fitness level
 - Presence of comorbidity (cardiac disease anorexia raynaud syndrome, exercise induced bronchospasm)

Environmental assessment

- Evaluate immediate and projected weather information, including air temperature, wind chill, and chance of precipitation.
- Identify activity intensity and clothing requirements for each individual.
- Have alternate plans in place for deteriorating conditions and activities that must be adjusted or canceled.
- The following guidelines will be used in planning activity depending on the wind chill temperature and “real feel” temperature. Conditions should be constantly re-evaluated for change in risk, including the presence of precipitation.

GUIDELINES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*Since wet conditions increase the effects of the cold and significantly increase body heat loss, EXTREME CAUTION will be used with air temperatures and wind chill readings below 40 degrees.

* Implementation and enforcement will be made by the Athletic Director with input from the Athletic Training Staff. A Variety of resources will be used to determine actual temperatures and wind chill including weather websites and handheld cold monitoring devices.

*TEMPERATURE & WIND CHILL	30 DEGREES F OR BELOW	25 DEGREES F OR BELOW	15 DEGREES F OR BELOW
Covering all exposed areas (legging, pants, hats , gloves)	X Highly recommended	X Required	
Layered clothing 92-3 layers)	X Highly recommended	X Required	
Watch and monitor athletes for cold exposure	X	X	
Provide easy access to warming areas every 30 minutes	X	X	
Send athletes indoors who are not properly dressed	X	X	
Exposure time	2 Hour Maximum Exposure	1 Hour Maximum Exposure	
<u>NO OUTDOOR ACTIVITY</u>			X

- **30 Degrees or Below** * **Be aware of the potential for cold injury**
 - Closely monitor athletes who may not be accustomed to cold weather workouts
 - Covering all exposed skin as indicated is **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED**
 - Layering of clothing is **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED**
- **25 Degrees or below** ***provide additional protective clothing, cover as much exposed skin as indicated, and provide opportunities and facilities for rewarming**
 - Covering as much exposed skin as indicated is **REQUIRED**
 - 2-3 layers on top, pants, covered head and hands
 - Legging, hat and gloved **REQUIRED**

- Layering of clothing is **REQUIRED**
 - Opportunities and facilities for athlete rewarming must be provided every 30 minutes
 - Maximum allowed cold weather exposure is 60 minutes (1 hour)
 - **COACHES ARE REQUIRED TO SEND ANY ATHLETE WHO IS NOT PROPERLY DRESSED INDOORS**
- **15 Degrees or Below: ALL OUTDOOR ACTIVITY IS CANCELED. PRACTICE INDOORS ONLY**

*Reference: Environmental Cold Injuries - National Athletic Trainers' Association,
www.nata.org/sites/default/files/EnvironmentalColdInjuries.pdf. Accessed 16 Oct. 2023.*