

Benalla Golf Club – Adverse Weather Policy

Approved by: Board of Management

Applies to: Members, guests, competition players, staff, contractors, volunteers

Review cycle: Annual (or after a significant weather event)

1. Purpose & Scope

This policy sets the thresholds and procedures for modifying, suspending or cancelling golf activities at Benalla Golf Club (BGC) due to adverse weather and environmental conditions. It covers competitions, social play, practice facilities, coaching and on-course work.

2. Roles & Responsibilities

- General Manager (GM): Overall duty-of-care; enacts course closure/suspension in consultation with the Course Superintendent and Golf Operations.
- Course Superintendent: Advises on course safety and protection (e.g., flooding, frost, windfall, turf protection) and may close the course to protect surfaces.
- Golf Operations / Match Committee: Applies policy to competitions; communicates decisions (siren/alerts/notice boards/website/socials/SMS where applicable).
- Coaching Staff/Contractors: Apply this policy to clinics/lessons and relocate or cancel as required.
- Players & Visitors: Personal responsibility to heed warnings and directions; cease play when instructed or when personal safety is at risk.

3. Decision Inputs & Monitoring

Official sources: Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) warnings & radar, CFA Fire Danger Ratings/Total Fire Bans, EPA Victoria air quality updates; on-course observations; lightning detectors/apps. Priority is always player/staff safety, then course protection, then scheduling considerations.

4. Heat & UV (Hot Weather) – Triggers & Actions

References: Golf Australia Hot Weather Guidelines (adapted from Sports Medicine Australia).

• $\geq 38^{\circ}\text{C}$ forecast/observed (shade temperature) – Modify: early starts, extra hydration/ice/water stations, shorten fields where possible.

• $\geq 40^{\circ}\text{C}$ forecast/observed – Taking into consideration time of day options to be considered:

1. Cancel timesheet and open new timesheet for a 8am shotgun start

2. Restrict start times, competition type, or consider reducing to 9 hole competition.

3. Suspend/Cancel competitions; restrict to social play at player discretion (no competition handicapping).

Junior clinics are cancelled or moved indoors from $\geq 36^{\circ}\text{C}$.

- UV Index ≥ 8 – Require sun protection measures (hats, SPF50+, sleeves), encourage shade breaks.

5. Lightning/Thunderstorms – Triggers & Actions

References: BoM/ABC guidance on the 30/30 rule; Australian sport lightning procedures; regional club practice.

- If time between lightning flash and thunder is < 30 seconds (30/30 rule) OR a strike is detected within ~ 10 km, IMMEDIATELY SUSPEND play/practice and evacuate to the clubhouse or enclosed vehicles. Do not shelter under trees, near metal fences, or on high ground.
- Resume only after 30 minutes have elapsed since the last observed thunder AND lightning has moved > 10 km away.

6. Smoke & Air Quality (PM2.5) – Triggers & Actions

References: EPA Victoria Air Quality Categories; enHealth national PM2.5 guidance.

Use local EPA air quality category for Benalla region:

- FAIR: Proceed with caution; reduce intensity for vulnerable people.
- POOR: Modify activities; cancel junior clinics/coaching; consider moving tee times.
- VERY POOR or HAZARDOUS: SUSPEND all outdoor play and practice; close the course/practice facilities.

7. Bushfire Danger Ratings & Total Fire Bans – Triggers & Actions

References: CFA Fire Danger Ratings system (Moderate, High, Extreme, Catastrophic).

- EXTREME: GM to conduct risk assessment; consider closure, shorten play windows, ban carts, and maintain ready communications.
- CATASTROPHIC: COURSE CLOSED and all outdoor activities cancelled. Follow CFA/VicEmergency directions.
- Total Fire Ban days: comply with all restrictions (no solid-fuel BBQs, hot-work bans, etc.).

8. High Winds – Triggers & Actions

References: BoM damaging wind/gale benchmarks.

- Sustained winds ≥ 65 km/h or BoM 'Damaging Winds' warning in effect: suspend/cancel competition play; practice facilities closed; carts prohibited.
- Any observed dangerous tree movement/limbs: immediate suspension and course inspection by Superintendent.

9. Heavy Rain, Flooding & Frost – Triggers & Actions

- Heavy rain/flooding: Superintendent may close holes/entire course to prevent damage; carts restricted to paths or prohibited. Competitions may proceed as 9 holes or postponed.
- Frost: Start delays until greens/tees are safe; the Superintendent determines clearance time; no walking or play on frosted greens.

10. Communication & Signals

- Suspension siren/air horn (or phone/SMS alert): one long continuous blast – SUSPEND PLAY; return to clubhouse immediately.
- Resume: two short blasts – RESUME PLAY (after official notice).
- Digital channels: website notice, MiClub/MiMembership alert, foyer signage, and social posts as appropriate.

11. Competitions & Handicapping

- If a competition is abandoned before a majority of the field completes 9 holes, results are null; fees handled under the Club's competition refund rules.
- If play resumes the same day, Match Committee determines whether to reduce to 9/12/14 holes per GA guidance and publish decision.

12. Duty of Care & Personal Responsibility

All participants share responsibility. Players with heat sensitivity, respiratory conditions, or other vulnerabilities should take extra precautions or withdraw.

13. Policy Review

This policy is reviewed annually before summer and after any major weather incident or regulatory change (CFA/BoM/EPA/Golf Australia).

References

- Golf Australia – Hot Weather Guidelines (adapted from Sports Medicine Australia).
- EPA Victoria – Air Quality Categories & advice.
- enHealth – National PM2.5 health advice (1-hr and 24-hr categories).
- CFA – Fire Danger Ratings & Total Fire Ban guidance.
- BoM/ABC – Lightning 30/30 rule; BoM damaging wind/gale benchmarks.
- Yarrowonga Mulwala, Cobram-Barooga GC & Clifton Springs GC – example extreme weather policies (regional context).