



# ECB EXTREME HEAT GUIDELINES 2026

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## Introduction

The following guidelines are intended for use in the event of extreme heat warnings and in order to help facilitate relevant stakeholders' planning and decision making in relation to ensuring the welfare of players, match officials, staff and spectators. Extreme heat events appear increasingly likely now with an increasing chance (1 in 4 chance) of each summer meeting or exceeding previous records both in the number and intensity of heat waves. 2026 appears to be no exception and 2027 predicted for even great summer heat events.

Extreme heat guidance has not been routine in the UK and is most common in countries with greater extremes of temperature and humidity. At this stage there are no ICC guidelines (although these are being developed). Cricket Australia does have a policy, but it should be noted it does not look to suspend play until it 'feels like' it is above 43°C. It uses somewhat more complex heat measures than our routine in this country.

These guidelines apply to the domestic professional game in England and Wales and to the staging of such events and can be read in conjunction with the relatively recent SGSA advice and guidance (March 2023), that were both developed in response to the extreme heat experienced in July 2022. These guidelines do not strictly apply to international games organised under the auspice of ICC. However, the information contained here should still assist with planning and staging those events.

<https://sgsa.org.uk/planning-for-extreme-heat/>

## Extreme Heat

Extreme heat conditions are by definition, those that are hotter and / or more humid than normal local summer thresholds. A heatwave is when these temperatures last three days or more. In the UK, average summer temperatures do not regularly exceed 28°C. However, much higher temperatures are now being experienced in the UK, with temperatures of 40°C experienced in a recent summer (2022) and the x 4 heatwaves experienced in 2025.

In addition, each ground will have its own degree of 'stillness' and radiant heat properties, which may generate even higher temperatures in the shade. Therefore, local risk assessment needs to be considered in addition to weather forecasts.

For the purpose of these guidelines, actual and predicted temperatures, as well as warnings of imminent periods of extreme heat and advice, will be sourced through information provided by the Met Office and UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA). As of 1<sup>st</sup> June 2023, these were revised and describe a Heat-Health alert period from June to September with a Cold-Health period from October to March. At the moment this alert service only covers England.

<https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/warnings-and-advice/seasonal-advice/heat-health-alert-service>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1155634/User-guide-impact-based-weather-and-health-alerting-system-v2.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1155634/User-guide-impact-based-weather-and-health-alerting-system-v2.pdf)

Guidance from Public Health Wales can be found at:

<https://phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/environmental-public-health/extreme-hot-weather/>

## Dangers of Heat

[Heat-related illnesses](#), like heat exhaustion or heat stroke, happen when the body is not able to cool itself properly. While the body normally cools itself by sweating, during extreme heat, this might not be enough. In these cases, a person's body temperature rises faster than it can cool itself. This can cause damage to the body's vital systems and organs. The impact of high temperatures can be made worse by increased humidity and exaggerated by high UV index.

Early warning signs can be very nonspecific such as headaches, weakness or tiredness (see below) and can affect vulnerable individuals such as the elderly and those with existing medical conditions. Therefore, prevention and early action is warranted.

[UKHSA / UK Gov Weather Warning Scale](#):

- **Green (preparedness):** *No alert will be issued as the conditions are likely to have minimal impact on health; business as usual and summer/winter planning and preparedness activities.*
- **Yellow (response):** *These alerts cover a range of situations. Yellow alerts may be issued during periods of heat/cold which would be unlikely to impact most people but could impact those who are particularly vulnerable.*
- **Amber (enhanced response):** *An amber alert indicates that weather impacts are likely to be felt across the whole health service, with potential for the whole population to be at risk. Non-health sectors may also start to observe impacts and a more significant coordinated response may be required.*
- **Red (emergency response):** *A red alert indicates significant risk to life for even the healthy population.*

### Cricket Activity / Heat / Sun exposure

Cricket is routinely played, around the world, in the hottest months of the year and not uncommonly in extreme heat and humidity. However, cancellation of cricket is extremely rare even though the impact of heat on players and subsequent mild 'heat illness' is not uncommon.

Whilst cricket is often considered sub-maximal exercise, in reality it generates a huge amount of heat, through repeated sprints and prolonged periods in the field. Overheating is a risk for all players but especially when bowling at pace or batting for prolonged periods (with protective equipment). In addition, darker coloured clothing may also be worn. The nature of repeated 'running in' bowling, the course of participation throughout a whole day, the nature of cricket clothing and protective equipment including helmets, all contribute to the generation of high body core temperatures. Combined with exposure to the hottest times of the day, absence of shade, access to cooling strategies, and radiation of heat from the venue, the risks of heat illness can increase significantly.

It should also be noted that UV exposure is also likely to be high and UV protection measures should be readily available including sunscreen, sunglasses and wide brimmed hats or caps. Ideally clothing should also incorporate UV protection. A UV index will be available through the Met Office as part of the above forecasts.

### Spectators

Cricket grounds often provide only modest shade and may well reduce air circulation and wind speed, increasing the 'feels like' temperature significantly above that of the temperature in the shade. Thus, spectators attending daytime games, who may also be in more vulnerable population groups, could face significant risk of overheating in extreme conditions. Furthermore, increased alcohol intake seen in some groups can increase the likelihood of dehydration and heat illness. Recent guidance from the SGSA, as above, should be reviewed to help with planning for medical incidents and appropriate mitigation including

potential extra medical resources, should be in place.

### Pyrotechnics / Flame Machines

The use of pyrotechnics, in particular flame machines, is a popular addition to the crowd experience provided at sporting events. The use of refined hydrocarbons, designed for stage effects, require significant safety considerations with strict guidelines and protocols (as per all pyrotechnics: SGSA). As a by product these machines, depending on fuel type, width, height and directions of flames, produce significant. Therefore additional consideration needs to be undertaken when considering their use in hot weather, especially given that the feels like temperature in Cricket grounds is often exaggerated in hot weather / heat waves: modest shade, increased radiant heat from stadium and reduced air circulation and wind speed.

As a result, organisers must consider deescalation as needed. A review by the Safety Officer, Venue Manager and Event Production must consider either a complete stand-down or a reduction in intensity, size and duration of the display, in line with other deescalation policies such as music.

<https://sgsa.org.uk/training-events-advice/specific-safety-issues/pyrotechnics/>

### Playing Conditions In Extreme Heat

The ECB may issue further guidance in advance of extreme heat, but all venues, Safety Officers, teams, and match officials should consult on plans to mitigate the impact of such extreme events.

All queries can be directed to the ECB Domestic Cricket Operations team, Chief Medical Officer or Head of Safety and Security.

### Planning and Welfare

Having strategies in place in advance provides the best chance of ensuring player, match official, staff and spectator welfare.

This may include increased and/or longer drinks breaks, which can help both on and off the field. In addition, consideration for a longer lunch and/or tea and potential to leave the field for drinks.

There is an ability for an umpire to suspend play or not allow it to start if the umpire considers that the conditions are either dangerous or unreasonable.

**Pre-Match:** In the week / days before, or morning of a game, check the forecasted ambient temperature, both actual and 'feels like', and UV index. Decisions on changing timings need to be made by midday the day before.

**During the match:** If weather conditions change unexpectedly during the match, consider immediate extreme heat management intervention.

**Drinks intervals:** A minimum of one drinks interval per session will be scheduled (Umpires will liaise with Captains on the day to confirm). The time taken for these intervals will be divorced from over-rate calculations.

**Hours of play:** Should both teams agree, the hours of play in multi-day matches may be shortened on

day(s) of extreme heat, with any time being made up on days when it is forecasted to be cooler. Timings will be determined at the time when the specific circumstances are known.

Ideally, any changes will be confirmed by midday on the day before the match in order that spectators and officials can be informed.

Second XI Championship matches have more flexibility and teams can work closely with umpires in the management of the conditions and timings/overs.

Consideration and risk assessment may need to be given to specific events such as age group matches and tournaments such as Under 19s, Super 4s and disability games.

### Local Venue Provision for Player Support

Playing conditions will be determined by the MO and may include increased and or longer drinks breaks, potential for extended lunch/tea, the potential to leave the field for drinks and if extreme there is always the opportunity to suspend play.

The highest reported temperatures in the UK that cricket has proceeded with was actual 40°C. This was with moderate humidity, only a slight breeze and a high UV index. The 'feels like' in some venues was perhaps more like 42-43°C.

In preparation venues / teams can look to:

1. Ensure cool drinks / adequate hydration is available.
2. Ensure off-field areas / dressing rooms / dining areas / MO rooms are as cool as possible, with air con if available.
3. Consider adjusting warm up routines (i.e. shorten / adjust)
4. Consider shortened bowling spells (5 overs at 38°C generates heat stress of 9 overs at 25°C)
5. Ensure availability of ice-towels / cooling aids.
6. Provide shaded areas for those outside or shortened routine exposure with appropriate sun protection accessories.
7. Consider staff that may be more vulnerable to heat.
8. Have increased awareness of signs of heat stress in individuals.
9. In case of heat stress and to aid performance recovery availability of cooling strategies such as cool showers / cold-water immersion in case of overheating.

The ECB MOs and CMO will look to provide information the day before and / or a heat briefing on the morning of play to outline any heat mitigation adjustments for the day's play.

### Staffing Including Stewards and Grounds Managers

Extreme heat, sun and UV exposure, and associated health hazards should be considered in your occupational health and safety risk assessment for your staff. Consider risks associated with:

1. Particularly vulnerable roles such as grounds management and stewarding.
2. Particularly vulnerable people (younger staff, older staff or staff with particular health conditions that increase risk).

Risk control measures described throughout this guide can be used including:

1. Reducing exposure,
2. More frequent rotation of staff,
3. Correct provision and use of personal protective equipment, clothing, eye protection and skin protection,
4. Maintain hydration with access to drinks,
5. Provision of shade and cooled spaces and
6. Monitoring and supervision.

Useful resources to assist with your risk assessment and the management of risk:

- <https://www.hse.gov.uk/temperature/>
- <https://www.hse.gov.uk/skin/employ/sunprotect.htm>
- <https://www.hse.gov.uk/skin/sunprotect.htm>
- <https://resources.thegma.org.uk/node/833>

### Major Match Preparation

Preparation for the impact of extreme heat is vital in helping with planning for major matches. Cricket grounds / stadiums are usually areas of high sun exposure with little shade and capable of exaggerating the ‘feels like’ temperature through reduced cooling potential of available breezes as well as radiation and reflection from the stands and stadium itself.

Coupled with a population that may be older, some with health issues, the prolonged periods as a spectator spent in the hottest parts of the day increases the risks of heat illness on a large scale. Alcohol can also exaggerate heat illness.

- As a result of the increasing likelihood of Extreme Heat, every venue is required to prepare an “Extreme Heat” contingency plan as a part of the venue operations manual.
- Tabletop exercises should include consideration of extreme heat
- For major matches the ECB should consult with suppliers in particular broadcast about the impact of extreme heat such as requiring additional shade for pitch side camera positions and the need for seat kills to support this.
- FREE Fluid / water provision
- Cooling areas (mist sprays / shade / fans)
- Restriction / control over alcohol sales
- Training for stewarding / staff on heat illness
- Extra announcements / signage over fluid intake / cooling strategies / sun-exposure

### Medical Consideration

Medical plans needs to consider the increase in heal related illness presentations many of which can be managed on site with adequate staffing and medical assessment and associated cooling areas.

- Additional staffing to manage heat illness and associated episodes of collapse. Consideration of balance of on-site Drs, paramedics, nurses, FREC3 or first aiders can be undertaken
- Additional air conditioned medical / cooling areas in event of emergencies
- Extra medical and cooling areas
- Extra ambulance(s) as per plan
- Planning for potential failure / impact on local NHS resources

### Additional Information on Heat Illness

The NHS provides some simple advice and guidance on recognition and management of heat illness:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/heat-exhaustion-heatstroke/>

### Symptoms and Signs of Heat Illness / Heat Exhaustion / Heat Stroke

- tiredness
- dizziness
- headache
- feeling sick or being sick
- excessive sweating and skin becoming pale and clammy or getting a [heat rash](#), but a change in skin colour can be harder to see on brown and black skin
- cramps in the arms, legs and stomach
- fast breathing or heartbeat
- a high temperature
- being very thirsty
- weakness