



NIAGARA FALLS SOCCER CLUB

Extreme Heat Policy and Protocol

At **Niagara Falls Soccer Club (NFSC)**, player health and safety are our top priorities. With the increasing frequency of high temperatures and humidity in our region, the Club has implemented this **Extreme Heat Policy & Protocol** to help protect players, coaches, officials, and volunteers during training and match play.

Program Cancellation & Modification Policy

While we aim to minimize disruptions to programming, the Club may modify or cancel sessions based on Environment Canada advisories and internal risk assessments.

Parents are always encouraged to make personal decisions about their child's participation in extreme heat. **Players will never be penalized** for missing a session due to heat-related concerns.

Heat Index Guidelines for Club Action

<u>Humidex / Temp</u>	<u>Club Action</u>
35°C+	Session may be cancelled or significantly modified
30–34°C	Mandatory water/rest breaks every 15 minutes
Below 30°C	Standard protocol applies



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All decisions regarding cancellation or session modification will be made by the **Club Executive Director/Technical Lead**, or assigned **Board Executive in conjunction with the Administrative Lead**, no later than **2 hours before** the session start time when possible.

Hydration Guidelines

Proper hydration is crucial for preventing heat-related illness. All players should arrive to sessions fully hydrated and bring refillable water bottles.

Recommended Intake:

- **3 hrs before play:** 500 ml (16 oz), sipped gradually
- **2 hrs before play:** 250 ml (8 oz), sipped gradually
- **During play:** 125–250 ml (4–8 oz) every 20 minutes
- **Post-activity:** Continue rehydrating and replenishing electrolytes

Additional **hydration stations** will be available on-site during extreme heat warnings.

Water Break Protocol

Referees and coaches are **required** to implement the following:

- **Mandatory water breaks** at the midpoint of each half
- **Extended halftime** to allow for rest and cooling
- **Breaks cannot be skipped or shortened** by coach request

Benches should be positioned in shaded areas when possible.

Signs of Heat-Related Illness

Players, coaches, and spectators should be alert for symptoms of heat stress. Early indicators may include:



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- Flushed or red face
- Dizziness or confusion
- Shortness of breath
- Goosebumps or chills
- Headache
- Lack of coordination
- Tingling in limbs
- Unresponsiveness or agitation

Any player exhibiting these symptoms must be removed from play immediately and monitored. Seek medical assistance if symptoms worsen or do not subside.

Sun Protection Guidelines

- **Hats may not be worn during games**, except for goalkeepers (subject to referee approval)
- Players on the sidelines are **strongly encouraged** to wear hats and sit in shaded areas
- Apply and reapply **sunscreen (SPF 30+)** before and during games

Air Quality Considerations

In addition to heat, NFSC will monitor the **Air Quality Health Index (AQHI)**.

- **AQHI 7+ (High Risk):** Consider session modifications or cancellation
- Factors such as wildfire smoke may increase health risks, even without extreme heat

Communication of Cancellations

In the event of schedule changes or cancellations due to extreme heat or AQI:

- Coaches and team managers will receive direct communication



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- Updates will be posted on the **NFSC website** and **social media**
- Notifications will be sent via **SportsEngine**

Ongoing Review

This policy is subject to regular review by the Club Executive and Board. Future updates may include:

- More specific AQHI thresholds
- Heat acclimatization guidelines
- Indoor training alternatives

Thank you for your cooperation and commitment to keeping our soccer community safe.

Policy Dated: June 28th, 2018

Policy Revised: June 28th, 2024

June 23rd, 2025