

Bows ACT Air Quality Policy (Interim)

Policy Title	Air Quality Policy (Interim)
Policy Category	Sports Governance
Constitutional Link	Bowls ACT Constitution (30052019) Clause 14.2.
Associated Policies	Bowls Australia Weather Policy Bowls ACT Conditions of Play
Responsible Officer (s)	Executive Officer
Associated Forms	Nil
Effective as of:	16 January 2020
Review Date:	1 January 2022

Purpose

Bowls ACT is a body responsible for the sport of bowls in the Australian Capital Territory and recognises the importance of health and fitness. Bowls ACT is committed to protecting its members from known and potential harms. This policy enables players, coaches, team managers and all other officials to make decisions about their participation in the game of bowls in particular environmental conditions.

Introduction

In the ACT and surrounding region bush fire smoke has become a significant contributor to poor air quality. From time to time, dust storms also have an effect on air quality. Monitoring the levels of air quality can assist in making decisions about whether bowls events need to be rescheduled or cancelled.

There is currently limited research to estimate the health risks for short term exposure to poor air quality. ACT Health has produced a Fact Sheet – “Outdoor Smoke – Health Impacts” which contains helpful information on symptoms, reactions and precautions.

<https://www.health.act.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-01/Outdoor%20Smoke%20-%20Health%20Impacts%20Factsheet%20-%20January%202020.pdf>

Air Quality Monitoring

There are a number of sources of air quality information, but it is important to appreciate that there are significant differences in the frequency, accuracy and format of the information provided.

Most sources quote an “Air Quality Index” which is not a raw measurement but a calculated figure based on how much the figure is above or below a standard. Other sources report total fine particulate matter per meter cubed of air, typically in the format PM_{2.5}.

Some sources report a rolling average of the past 24 hours, others have an hourly (or more frequent) reading. Most readings are reported in Australian Eastern Standard Time and need to be adjusted for daylight saving.

In the ACT, there are three air quality monitoring stations: Monash, Civic and Florey. There is a regional NSW air monitoring station at Goulburn. Sources reporting readings for locations other than these have simply extrapolated from these readings and must be interpreted with that in mind.

Policy for Bowls ACT Events

Suspension or cessation of play for reasons of poor air quality will be considered in the same way as other weather events (rain, extreme heat etc) and decisions made on the day.

In deciding whether an event should proceed, the Controlling Body – either Bowls ACT or the host Club as the delegated Controlling Body (or the Umpire, if so delegated by the host Club) – must , using the data from the nearest air monitoring station*, establish the most recent PM_{2.5} reading[#].

- If the reading is in excess of 40 µg/m³, play is not to commence.
- If the reading is below 40 µg/m³ play may commence, with hourly monitoring. If a subsequent reading reaches 40 µg/m³ or more, play must be suspended for a period of up to 60 minutes or until the reading falls below 40 µg/m³. Play may be abandoned for the day at the discretion of the Controlling Body.
- If the reading falls between 26 and 39.9 µg/m³ players are to be warned that the readings are in the “unhealthy for sensitive groups[@]” range.

NB1: *Controlling Bodies and players should be aware that the nearest air monitoring station may not accurately reflect the situation at a particular club. Common sense should be applied if a reading is inconsistent with observed conditions.

NB2: #Bowls ACT does not endorse or recommend any particular site or ‘App’. However, for purposes of consistency, for events being played in the ACT and Queanbeyan, Bowls ACT will use readings from www.canberraair.com. This site is updated hourly, and contains statements of trends (ie increasing or decreasing) which may be helpful in decision making. For events being played in Crookwell, Goulburn and Yass, the ‘Apps’ “Air Rater” will be used for current readings, and “Air Visual” for trends. All of the above-mentioned sites/apps source their data from either ACT Health or the NSW Office of Environment & Heritage.

NB3: @The ACT Health definition of “sensitive groups” is “people over 65, children 14 years and younger, pregnant women and those with existing heart or lung conditions.” Smoke particles can also aggravate existing lung conditions, such as chronic bronchitis, emphysema and asthma. Bowls ACT recommends people in this group reconsider their continued participation in the event.

Further Information

Further information that may be helpful:

General Alerts

<https://health.act.gov.au/public-health-alert/heavy-smoke-and-hot-conditions-act#heavysmoke>

About Masks

<https://health.act.gov.au/public-health-alert/heavy-smoke-and-hot-conditions-act#p2n95masks>

NSW Air Monitoring

<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/air/monitoring-air-quality>

Sports Medicine Australia – Lawn Bowls Fact Sheet

<https://sma.org.au/resources-advice/lawn-bowls/>

See also the ACT Health Advisory Categories (over)

Smoky air (PM_{2.5}) health advisory categories – ACT Health

Air quality categories PM _{2.5} (24 hour) µg/m ³	Potential health effects without following advice or actions	Cautionary health advice/actions**
Good 0-8.9 µg/m ³	N/A – Below the relevant air quality standard	None
Meets air quality standard 9-25.9 µg/m ³	N/A – Meets the relevant air quality standard	No tailored advice necessary
Unhealthy for sensitive groups 26-39.9 µg/m ³	Symptoms may occur in sensitive groups	<p>Sensitive groups[#] should <u>reduce</u> prolonged or heavy physical activity. Where possible, these people in the community should also limit the time spent outdoors</p> <p>Anyone with a heart or lung condition should take their medication as prescribed by their doctor. People with asthma should follow their asthma action plan. Anyone with concerns about their health should seek medical advice from their doctor. Anyone experiencing wheezing, chest tightness or difficulty breathing should seek urgent medical attention</p>
Unhealthy for all 40-106.9 µg/m ³	Increased likelihood of effects for sensitive groups. Symptoms may occur in the general population	<p>Everyone should <u>reduce</u> prolonged or heavy physical activity</p> <p>Sensitive groups[#] should <u>avoid</u> prolonged or heavy physical activity altogether</p> <p>Anyone with a heart or lung condition should take their medication as prescribed by their doctor. People with asthma should follow their asthma action plan. Anyone with concerns about their health should seek medical advice from their doctor. Anyone experiencing wheezing, chest tightness or difficulty breathing should seek urgent medical attention</p>
Very unhealthy for all 107-177.9 µg/m ³	Significant likelihood of effects for sensitive groups Symptoms among general population common	<p>Everyone should <u>avoid</u> prolonged or heavy physical activity</p> <p>Sensitive groups[#] should <u>avoid</u> all physical activity outdoors</p> <p>Anyone with a heart or lung condition should take their medication as prescribed by their doctor. People with asthma should follow their asthma action plan. Anyone with concerns about their health should seek medical advice from their doctor. Anyone experiencing wheezing, chest tightness or difficulty breathing should seek medical attention</p>
Hazardous high >177.9 µg/m ³	Serious likelihood of effects for sensitive groups Symptoms among general population very common	<p>Everyone should <u>avoid</u> all physical activity outdoors</p> <p>Sensitive groups[#] should <u>temporarily relocate</u> to a friend or relative living outside the affected area. If this is not possible, <u>remain indoors and keep activity levels as low as possible</u></p> <p>Anyone with a heart or lung condition should take their medication as prescribed by their doctor. People with asthma should follow their asthma action plan. Anyone with concerns about their health should seek medical advice from their doctor. Anyone experiencing wheezing, chest tightness or difficulty breathing should seek medical attention</p> <p>Anyone experiencing symptoms which may be due to smoke exposure should consider taking a break away from the smoky conditions</p>
Hazardous extreme > 250 µg/m ³	Serious likelihood of effects for sensitive groups Symptoms among general population very common	Cautionary health advice and actions are the same as for Hazardous high above