

Kansas State High School Activities Association

BOARD POLICY: HEAT ACCLIMATIZATION RECOMMENDATIONS for MARCHING BAND and SPIRIT ACTIVITIES

Heat stroke is the leading cause of death in students participating in outdoor activities during warm weather months. Heat stroke and other heat illnesses **are preventable** by following these guidelines:

1. Prepare for Activity

Parents should make sure that students are in good general health and fit to perform.

2. Proper Acclimatization

Have a formal training plan in place for your students which incorporates a gradual increase in outdoor practice time over the first 1-2 weeks of practice. Research indicates the first five days of practice are when students are most susceptible to heat illness. It is during this period necessary physiologic adaptations are taking place in the body to better handle exercise stress in a hot/humid environment. During this time only single outdoor practices per day are recommended and total outdoor practice time should not exceed 2-3 hours per day.

3. Emergency Action Plan

Have an emergency action plan in place that addresses heat emergencies. Be sure the entire emergency action plan is rehearsed and reviewed with everyone involved, including local EMS personnel **BEFORE** practice begins in the summer.

4. Know Your At-Risk Students

Students with a previous history of exertional heat illness, are sickle cell trait positive, have a low fitness level or are recovering from a recent illness are more susceptible to heat illness. These students need to be monitored closely and adjustments may need to be made to their practice schedule. Students with a fever, nausea/vomiting, or other illness should not participate in warm weather activities.

5. Heat Policy

Every school should have a policy in place with mandatory activity and uniform modifications based on the current heat index or wet bulb globe temperature. The heat index or wet bulb globe temperature needs to be obtained **at the practice site** prior to any warm weather practice. Refer to the KSHSAA website for a heat index chart indicating risk levels based on the heat index reading.

6. What to Wear

Wear light or white colored shorts and t-shirts to avoid overheating during practice. This is especially important for anyone carrying heavy instruments for long periods of time. Save the formal attire – heavy hats, dark clothing and shoes – for dress rehearsals and get comfortable in them before game day. Be aware that the weight of the material and dark colors keep heat “in.”

7. Monitor Band Members

Band members should be monitored at all times on the field for signs of heat illnesses by a parent, band director, certified athletic trainer or other individual.

8. Cooling Area

An area should be designated where your students can cool down and rest. This could be an area of shade, a canopy or easy access to an air-conditioned facility. **During warm weather practices, a cold tub should be located in this cooling area.** The tub should be large enough to submerge someone up to their torso in a seated position with the water temperature between 45-60 degrees. Any time heat stroke is suspected, rapid cooling in the cold tub should immediately take place. Current best practices recommend rapid onsite cooling **before** emergency transport to a hospital. This procedure should be reviewed and rehearsed with your local emergency medical personnel.

9. Hydration

Students should have unrestricted access to water. Schedule frequent hydration breaks – do not allow your students to wait to feel thirsty. Water is the best hydration choice. Sports drinks with low sodium and carbohydrate levels are also good options. **Avoid energy drinks, soda, fruit juices, carbonated beverages and caffeine.**

10. Promote Positive Overall Health Habits to Your Students:

- Adequate sleep
- Proper nutrition
- Proper hydration habits on a daily basis
- Avoid nutritional supplements and energy drinks