

## **EXTREME WEATHER POLICY**

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to Ottawa Bicycle Club (OBC) event coordinators, as well as more specific guidance to coaches and parents on how to address extreme weather affecting OBC outdoor activities (including group rides, organized training activities and other events, such as Time Trials).

In general, the conditions that can affect the safety of cyclists participating in outdoor activities are as follows:

1. Freezing rain or snow accumulation on the road
2. Strong winds, usually associated with thunderstorms or tornado conditions
3. Extreme temperatures
4. Poor visibility
5. Air pollution, including wildfire smoke

OBC Directors, event coordinators, and coaches will consider the risks associated to these and all other weather conditions and are empowered to cancel an activity if they believe there is undue risk to cyclists' safety. Adult members (19 years of age and over) may choose to continue with the activity, but it will no longer be considered an OBC activity.

### **Freezing rain or snow accumulation on the road**

Icy and slippery road conditions, which may occur even when the ambient temperature is above freezing, are hazardous to cyclists. Cancellation should be considered if these road conditions are present.

### **Strong Winds, Thunderstorms, Tornadoes**

OBC activities will not be initiated when thunder and/or lightning is present, and thirty minutes must pass from the last clap of thunder or flash of lightning. During an activity that takes place in a small area (such as Time Trials, Clinics or training practices), if lightning or thunder starts, or a tornado warning is issued by Environment Canada, , activities are to be stopped by the event coordinator. For group rides covering large areas, group leaders must make local decisions regarding pausing or continuing to ride if thunderstorms or tornadic conditions are encountered during the ride.

## **Extreme Temperatures**

The additional guidance below, relating to heat and humidity, is added to address the particular needs of youth athletes in the OBC Youth Program. Sports Medicine Australia provides comprehensive guidelines on hot weather and young athletes

(<https://sma.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/SMA-Extreme-Heat-Policy-2021-Final.pdf> ).

This documentation includes an effective table to guide OBC Youth Program decisions on ambient temperature and is applied as follows:

- Where the temperature is in the “Extreme - ambient temperature of 36C and above and relative humidity exceeding 30%”, the OBC Youth Program will not hold training or racing events.
- When the ambient temperature becomes “High – very high - 31C to 35C with relative humidity exceeding 50%”, intensity is to be limited, and event duration to no more than 60 minutes. Water and shade breaks need to be incorporated into the training plans.
- Children prior to puberty are particularly susceptible as their sweating mechanism is not yet fully developed. For this reason, activities for children of ages 12 and under during “High – very high” risk range are to be cancelled.

## **Poor Visibility**

Poor visibility may be associated to fog, smoke, or other sources. The decision to start or continue an activity should be weighed against the risk of cyclists not being visible to motor vehicles, pedestrians, or other cyclists

## **Air pollution, including wildfire smoke**

Air pollution and/or smoke from wildfires may affect OBC activities. Some cyclists with respiratory concerns, such as asthma, COPD, emphysema, etc. are at higher risk from air pollution or smoke, and participation in an OBC activity may trigger undesirable health impacts for these individuals.

Forecasting the timing and localized impact of air pollution and smoke is less reliable than the standard weather forecast, so cancellation of activities should generally be determined as close as possible to the commencement of the event. Adult members (19 years of age and over) may choose to continue with the activity, but it will no longer be considered an OBC activity.

## **Event Cancellation Procedures**

Using the framework above, decisions on cancelling an OBC activities will occur in one of two ways:

Where possible, to electronically communicate a decision to members/program registrants at least 1.5 hours before the start time of the activity,

- Otherwise, a decision can also be made at the start of, or at any time during, an activity.

A decision to cancel an OBC-sanctioned activity or event will be communicated electronically to the athlete's contact addresses when made in advance, or via any applicable OBC social media accounts. A cancellation made at the start of, or at any time during, a training session or event will be communicated verbally.

It is the parent(s)/guardian(s) responsibility to be aware of weather conditions and to be available to receive a child for any cancellation made during a training session.

This may lead to cancellation for all or part of the athletes, depending on age and susceptibility to the adverse conditions or due to dangerous riding conditions.

The responsibility matrix for a decision to cancel an activity is as follows:

- Touring Director (or delegate) – any OBC Day tour
- Event Coordinator (in consultation with the ride leader) – any OBC event for which they have responsibility, such as a Time trial, or remote city
- Youth Director (or delegate) - Any Youth Program cancellation made in advance of a Youth Program activity
- Youth Program lead Coach - The lead coach of any training group (e.g., Fundamentals, Learn-to-train, Train-to-train) may make a decision to cancel a training session or event at the start of, or at any time during a training session or event for the athletes under supervision
- Youth Racing Program Lead Coach - Any cancellation of a Youth Racing Program training session or event.

## **Weather Related Safety Measures – Youth Program Activities**

In order to ensure the ongoing safety of our young athletes, the following measures are to be followed and failure to adhere to these measures may make them ineligible to participate in a Youth Program activities:

- *Early and late season cold:* Athletes are expected to cover their knees and arms when the riding temperature falls below 15C. Wearing more than one layer and full fingered gloves are required when temperatures are below 10C.
- *Hydration:* All riders must have a full 500ml or larger water bottle with them prior to the start of exercising and available while riding.