

Graham ISD Athletics Cold Policy

Exposure to excessive cold can not only be uncomfortable for the participants but also coaching/support staff, friends, and family that are in attendance at practices, contests or events. In addition to making these individuals uncomfortable, excessive cold has been proven to impair athletic performance and can lead to life-threatening medical emergencies. Hypothermia is a significant drop in body temperature and it can occur at temperatures above freezing. A wet and windy temperature in the mid-30s can feel much worse than a dry and calm evening with the temperature at 32 degrees Fahrenheit.

When developing this policy Graham ISD personnel evaluated multiple policies from districts across the state. GISD then attempted to construct a policy that will be in the best interests of the student-athletes, support staff, and fans of Steer and Lady Blues athletes. It is important to understand that what may be considered too cold to participate in one part of the state may be acceptable in another part of the state or in another state altogether.

After evaluating multiple cold weather policies it was determined that the most accurate way to evaluate environmental conditions is to use the AccuWeather RealFeel factor. This factor takes into account multiple parameters. They are ambient temperature, wind speed, solar intensity, humidity/precipitation intensity/type, elevation, and atmospheric pressure. This is a better indicator for environmental conditions. This factor can be obtained either on the Accuweather app downloaded onto the user's smartphone or by going to www.accuweather.com and using the Graham zip code of 76450.

While adherence to the recommendations and the policy listed below is vital to the individual who will be participating in the elements it is also critical that proper clothing is worn by the athlete to help maintain body heat as best as possible. The lower the RealFeel factor is the more important it is for the athlete to dress in layers and also stay dry. Also, heat loss from the head and neck area can account for up to 50% of total heat loss so that area should be covered as well. Other extremities should also be covered as well. This includes arms, legs, and hands.

Cold Exposure:

- Breathing of cold air can increase the chances of asthma attacks because of bronchospasm
- Coughing, chest tightness, and burning sensations in nasal passages and throat
- Reduction in strength, power, endurance and aerobic activity
- Reduction in core body temperature will cause a reduction in motor output

Cold Recognition:

- Shivering is a means to generate body heat
- Excessive shivering contributes to fatigue and loss of motor skills
- Numbness and pain in fingers, toes, ears, and exposed tissue
- Reduction in core temperature can cause an athlete to exhibit sluggishness, slowed speech, and disorientation

Temperature Determination:

- Coaches or Athletic Trainer will obtain weather report specifically looking at the RealFeel temperature from Accuweather app or www.accuweather.com and use Graham, Texas or 76450 zip code.
- The report should be taken 30 minutes prior to the beginning of outdoor activities on practice days. On game days it should be taken at a time (suggested 2 pm) that would allow the visiting team to alter travel plans.
- The RealFeel temperature should be used to make modifications/cancellations

Cold Policy Games:

- This policy is for games played at Graham ISD facilities only. When GISD teams are the visiting team then that school district's policy will be followed.
- ***The game should be rescheduled/canceled if the RealFeel is 25 or below by 2 pm on game day or if it is forecasted to be at that level by the beginning of the contest.***
- If the RealFeel is between 25-30 there should be consideration given to shortening the game/contest. This could also include no extra time periods being played.

Recommended Actions for Practices:

RealFeel 32-35 with precipitation

- 45 minutes of exposure or less
- Athletes should be in warm-ups with extremities covered

RealFeel below 32 with precipitation

- Indoor activity is strongly recommended

RealFeel 32-35 (Dry)

- 60 minutes of exposure
- Athletes should be in warm-ups with extremities covered

RealFeel 26-31 (Dry)

- 45 minutes of exposure
- Athletes should be in warm-ups with extremities covered

RealFeel of 25 or below

- Indoor activity is strongly recommended

Graham ISD Lightning Policy

Lightning is the most consistent and significant weather hazard that may affect interscholastic athletes and other outdoor activities. Within the United States, the National Severe Storms Laboratory (NSSL) estimates more than 100 fatalities and 400-500 injuries requiring medical treatment occur from lightning strikes every year. While the probability of being struck by lightning is extremely low, the odds are significantly greater when a storm is in the area and the proper safety precautions are not followed. Three-Quarters of all lightning casualties occur between May and September, and nearly four out of five occur between 10 am and 7 pm.

Chain of Command:

Athletic Trainer -> Head Coach/Game Officials->Game Administrators->Assistant Coaches

Designated Weather Watchers:

Graham ISD uses the Perry Weather lightning warning system to determine if lightning is within an unsafe distance (10 miles) of GISD athletic facilities. Athletic Trainers will monitor current weather and keep members of the chain of command informed. All representatives in the "Chain of Command" should monitor local weather forecast and maintain awareness of incoming thunderstorms.

Perry Weather Lightning Warning System

Suspension of Activities-Participants and staff should take cover in a safe shelter until the warning has expired. Safe shelter is defined as any building where doors and windows can be closed. A baseball or softball dugout or underneath bleachers should NOT be considered safe shelter. In the absence of a building, a car or school bus with the windows up is the next best option. It is recommended that spectators seek shelter as well.

Lightning Warning Systems Locations

- Graham High School Field House
- Graham Junior High
- Graham Baseball/Softball Complex

Lightning Warning System Activation

1. Audible horns attached to the warning systems sound when lightning is within a 10-mile radius of the location. This distance allows for the suspension of practices, games, recess, PE, roof or grounds work by maintenance, or other outdoor activity and indicate movement to indoor safe areas is required. If you are close enough to either of the two stationary warning systems, you may hear the horns, if outside.

- 3 horn blasts will sound announcing an active lightning event.
- While lightning is present and activities are delayed, a yellow strobe light on the warning device will flash
- A single long blast tone will sound the all clear.

2. Electronic alerts, SMS text messaging and emails, will be generated and sent to Emergency Management, Sports Medicine & appropriate athletic personnel, band directors, principals, assistant principals. These will signify when the alert has sounded and also when the all-clear has been given.

3. The all-clear will sound once there has not been a lightning strike within 10 miles of the facility for 30 consecutive minutes. Outdoor activity should NOT resume until the all-clear has sounded. This includes warming up, stretching, field set up or any any other outdoor activity.