

Beyond Blue Staff & Volunteer Outdoor Events Extreme Weather Guidelines

Introduction

Beyond Blue is committed to providing and maintaining a working environment that is safe and without risk to the health or wellbeing of our people including our employees and volunteers ([Health, Safety and Wellbeing policy](#)).

These guidelines aim to mitigate risks from extreme weather conditions including extreme heat and cold, rain, hail and floods, thunderstorms and lightning, high winds as well as sand, dust or smoke airborne contaminants before they can impact on our people.

Guidelines

The Beyond Blue Events and Volunteers team will monitor the appropriate authority reports, including the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the week and days leading up to scheduled outdoor events.

A final decision will be made based on the updated 5pm forecast the night before each event. Staff and volunteers will be informed of any changes as a result of forecast extreme weather by 6pm the evening prior to the shift via email and text message.

There may also be instances where extreme weather concerns present suddenly at events. Staff and volunteers should follow the instructions from the Beyond Blue Events and Volunteers team or event organisers.

Communications will be distributed to Beyond Blue staff and volunteers consistent with these Guidelines prior to the commencement of the event.

Daily monitoring of extreme weather will be recorded in the Extreme Weather Action Register Sheet (attached).

1. Extreme Heat

Heat-related stress can lead to dizziness, headaches, collapse and illness. In its extreme form, heat can be life threatening.

If temperature is forecast to reach 35 degrees or higher the following day per BOM website, a decision will be made to cancel the shift.

Where temperatures are forecast to reach between 30 – 35 degrees, staff and volunteers will be contacted and given the option to withdraw from their volunteer shift if they feel uncomfortable working in such conditions.

For both options, staff and volunteers will be given the option to reschedule their volunteer activity to an alternative day, if event dates permit.

For conditions that are safe to volunteer, but are still hot, the Beyond Blue team will ensure volunteers are provided with regular breaks, sunscreen and shaded areas are made available. For some events, a Beyond Blue cap will be provided, however staff and volunteers should dress appropriately and are required to bring their own hat, sunglasses and refillable water bottle. Volunteers will be encouraged to rehydrate regularly, irrespective of weather conditions.

2. Extreme Cold

Cold-related stress can lead to shivering, slurred speech, lack of coordination, confusion, and consciousness, along with hypothermia and illness. In its extreme form, cold can be life threatening.

If temperature is forecast to reach a maximum of 9 degrees or lower, when accompanied with wind chill, rain, hail or snow the following day per BOM website, a decision will be made to cancel the shift for the following day.

For evening events, the nightly minimum should be taken into account should the temperature be forecast to drop below 9 degrees.

If an evening event is cancelled due to extreme weather, staff and volunteers will be given the option to reschedule their volunteer activity to an alternative day, if event dates permit.

Whilst at the event, the 'feels like' temperature will also be considered, and if this temperature reaches below nine degrees, the Beyond Blue Events and Volunteers team or event organiser may suspend volunteer duties until it is considered safe enough to return. Alternatively, the remainder of the volunteer shift may be cancelled if it is deemed to be unsafe.

For conditions safe to volunteer, but still cold, the Beyond Blue Events and Volunteers team will ensure volunteers are provided with regular breaks and protected areas. Staff and volunteers should dress appropriately for the weather and wear warm clothing, jackets, gloves and comfortable closed toed shoes, irrespective of extreme weather conditions.

3. Rain, Hail & Flood

Rain, hail and flooding have the potential to create dangerous conditions for staff, volunteers, officials and participants at outdoor events, including damage, injury and worse case death.

In most instances, it is unlikely an event will be cancelled the day prior due to heavy rain or hail forecasts. These are usually localised and short-term events and will be evaluated on the day.

Whilst at the event, where rain, hail or flood create a high to extreme risk, the Beyond Blue Events and Volunteers team or event official may suspend volunteer duties until it is safe to return. Alternatively, the remainder of the volunteer shift may be cancelled if it is deemed to be unsafe.

4. Thunderstorms & Lightning

The definition of a thunderstorm is where lightning can be seen and/or thunder can be heard. Any storm which produces thunder means lightning is always present, even if it is obscured. Lightning has the potential to cause damage, injury and worse case death.

In most instances it is unlikely an event will be cancelled the day prior due to thunderstorm forecasts. These are usually localised and short-term events and will be evaluated on the day.

The simplest and most effective way to assess this distance of lightening is the 30-second rule. If there is less than 30 seconds between the lightning and thunder, the lightning is within 10 km of the listener. (30 seconds at the speed of sound is 10.2km). If a lightning strike is within 10km of the event, the Beyond Blue Events and Volunteers team and event officials must suspend the event and ensure participants, officials, staff and volunteers are removed from the area to a safe place, such as a large, structurally sound building.

The event and volunteer duties can resume once the threat of lightening has passed. This will be measured by the lightning and thunder being greater than 30 seconds apart. Alternatively, the remainder of the volunteer shift may be cancelled if it is deemed to be unsafe.

In the case of a thunderstorm asthma related risk, the Beyond Blue Events and Volunteers team to request that volunteers with known respiratory conditions or asthma to reconsider their participation at the event, or if participating to have their medication at hand.

5. High Winds

High winds have the potential to create dangerous conditions for staff, volunteers, officials and participants at outdoor events, including damage, injury and worse case death.

In most instances it is unlikely an event will be cancelled the day prior due to high wind forecasts. These are usually localised and short-term events and will be evaluated on the day.

Examples of windy conditions which create a high to extreme risk and where event may be suspended or cancelled include:

- foreign objects being blown around the venue
- event furniture, signage or fixtures being disturbed
- fences or temporary structures being damaged
- staff, volunteers, officials or participants health being affected by the force of the wind

Where high winds create a high to extreme risk, the Beyond Blue Events and Volunteers team or event official may suspend volunteer duties until it is safe to return. Alternatively, the remainder of the volunteer shift may be cancelled if it is deemed to be unsafe.

6. Sand, Dust or Smoke (Airborne Contaminants)

Poor sand, dust or smoke air quality can be dangerous for staff, volunteers, officials and participants at outdoor events. These conditions can lead to foreign objects landing in people's eyes and could cause breathing difficulties. They could potentially be life threatening for those with pre-existing respiratory conditions.

The state-based Environment Protection Agency's (EPA) monitors the quality of air by measuring the air for pollutants that can affect human health. The EPA provides the results from their air monitoring on its website.

The Beyond Blue Events and Volunteers team will monitor the [EPA AirWatch website](#) which is updated at 5.00pm daily with the forecast air quality for the next 24 hours.

EPA uses five categories to describe the overall air quality at each monitoring site and depending on the forecast category, the following actions are to be undertaken:

Air Quality Category	Advice / Action
Good	Beyond Blue employee/volunteers shift proceeds. No additional communications to Beyond Blue employees/volunteers required.
Moderate	Volunteers shift proceeds. No additional communications to volunteers required. Beyond Blue onsite management will monitor conditions hourly on EPA website during shift and if conditions worsen, will advise volunteers shift is cancelled as soon as practicable via email and text message.
Poor	Volunteers will be advised by 6pm of conditions the evening prior to the shift. If conditions worsen overnight, volunteers will be advised by 8.00am the day of the shift. Volunteers sensitive to air pollution (over 65's, pregnant, those with existing heart/lung conditions or diabetes) will be advised to not attend their shift. Other volunteers are to be given the option to either attend or not attend their shift. These volunteers will be given the option to be located indoors within the concourse areas across the precinct. Volunteers will be provided with a P2 mask to wear during their shift. Beyond Blue onsite management will monitor conditions hourly on EPA website during shift and if conditions worsen, will advise volunteers shift is cancelled as soon as practicable via email and text message.
Very Poor	Volunteer shift is cancelled. Volunteers will be advised of cancelled shift by 6pm the evening prior or by 8.00am on the day of the shift via email and text message.
Hazardous	Volunteer shift is cancelled. Volunteers will be advised of cancelled shift by 6pm the evening prior or by 8.00am on the day of the shift via email and text message.

Extreme Weather Action Register Template

Event name and date	Extreme Weather Risk	Forecast / Observation	Advice / Action	Communicated to staff and volunteers			Comments <i>(Number of staff / volunteers contacted)</i>
				By <i>(Name)</i>	On <i>(Date)</i>	At <i>(Time)</i>	
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