

HB 1663/SB 1104

Guidelines, policies, and procedures on the prevention and management of heat illness in student-athletes.



Bill Patron: Delegate Micheal J. Jones (77th House District) and Senator Ghazala F. Hashmi (15th Senate District)

What The Bill Does:

The bill requires each school board to develop and update, in accordance with the guidelines developed by the Board of Education, policies on student-athlete extreme heat safety and protection that (i) are consistent with any heat guidelines based on Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) levels developed by an organization or entity whose purpose it is to regulate or govern interscholastic athletics programs in the Commonwealth; (ii) establish tiered heat-acclimatization and modification procedures for outdoor athletics practices or games based on the WBGT levels to reduce the risks associated with extreme heat faced by student-athletes; (iii) require student-athletes to be given unhindered access to hydration and a cooling space at all times; (iv) include procedures relating to preventing, recognizing, and addressing heat-related illnesses; and (v) establish a process for reporting and investigating any instance in which a student-athlete experiences a heat-related illness requiring emergency medical treatment or resulting in death.

Why Does This Matter?

- Ensuring the inclusion of tiered heat-acclimatization and modification procedures further enhances the safety and well-being for students.
- Incorporating evidence-based extreme heat protocols based on Wet Bulb Glove Temperature (WGBT) provide a more accurate way to estimate the level of heat stress on students in direct sunlight.

How Does This Impact Students?

- By providing consistent access to hydration and modifications to physical activities based on WBGT across the Commonwealth, all students are protected by the same safety protocols regardless of where they are practicing or competing.

How Does This Impact School Divisions?

Each school board shall develop and update policies in alignment with the Virginia Board of Education's guidelines on student-athlete extreme heat safety and protection. Such policies will include:

- Consistency with any heat guidelines based on WBGT developed by an organization or entity that aims to regulate or govern interscholastic athletics programs in the Commonwealth.
- Parameters relating to scheduling outdoor athletics practices or games during different WBGT levels and establishing the WBGT levels at which outdoor activities, practices, or games will be canceled.
- A heat-acclimatization and modification procedure for outdoor athletics practices or games consisting of at least five tiers of procedures for outdoor activities, practices, or games based on heat or humidity levels, with the first tier outlining heat-acclimatization and modification procedures for the lowest heat or humidity level requiring special student-athlete safety and protection precautions and the final tier outlining heat-acclimatization and modification procedures for the most severe heat or humidity level before the level at which all outdoor athletics practices or games will be canceled.

- Such tiered heat-acclimatization and modification procedures will include required equipment modification, if applicable for the activity, modification of work-to-rest ratios, modification of water break requirements, and procedures relating to using shaded areas for rest breaks.
- Requirements for each student-athlete to be always given unhindered access to hydration and cooling space, which may be a shaded or air-conditioned area, and each student-athlete and each coach to be provided ice at any time there is a WBGT level of 80 degrees Fahrenheit or higher.
- Procedures for preventing, recognizing, and addressing heat-related illnesses, including dehydration, heat syncope, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke.
- A process for reporting and investigating any instance in which a student-athlete experiences a severe heat-related illness requiring emergency medical treatment or resulting in death.

What Resources Are Available?

- The [VDOE Guidelines for Policies on Heat-Related Illness Prevention in Student Athletes pursuant to Senate Bill 161 from the 2022 General Assembly session – Updated January 2025](#) contains comprehensive guidance developed by the Board of Education to assist school boards with developing policies and procedures around heat-related illness prevention.
- The [Virginia High School League Handbook](#) includes practice guidelines and resources to develop and implement heat acclimation policies and procedures.
- [Virginia High School League \(VHSL\) Heat and Hydration resource web page](#) lists resources related to heat and hydration developed by the Virginia High School League.
- [Recognizing, Preventing and Treating Heat-Related Illness](#) is a course on heat-related illness developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- [Beat the Heat](#) is an informational one-sheet on heat-related illness prevention from the National Athletic Trainer’s Association.
- The [Korey Stringer Institute](#) provides comprehensive information on Wet Bulb Globe Temperature Monitoring.
- The [Hydration webpage](#) provides comprehensive information on hydration and recommendations for effective hydration while active from the Korey Stringer Institute.
- The [Sun Safety - The Cancer Action Coalition of Virginia webpage](#) provides resources from the Cancer Action Coalition of Virginia and the Virginia Department of Health on sun safety.

What Additional Items Will Be Released?

- The Virginia Board of Education will release revised Guidelines for Policies on Heat-Related Illness Prevention in Student Athletes on or before July 1, 2025. The guidelines will be reviewed biennially and updated as necessary thereafter.

School Division Next Steps:

- It is recommended that local school divisions meet with their athletic trainers, athletic directors, and principals of elementary and secondary schools who offer student activities (e.g. marching band, JROTC, athletic activities, running clubs, afterschool activities, etc.) to discuss a plan for compliance with this legislation.
- Review and update emergency management and medical emergency response plans in accordance with [Code of Virginia Section 22.1-279.8](#) and the Virginia Board of Education's guidelines on student-athlete extreme heat safety and protection.
- Provide educational materials on heat-related illnesses to student-athletes and families. Materials should include risks, best practices, and effective prevention strategies.

- Ensure coaches and staff are trained in monitoring signs and symptoms of heat-related illnesses and prepared to quickly respond in the event of a heat-related illness.

Who is the VDOE Contact:

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