

# 9

## ENVIRONMENT

AFF  
thinksafe

### ENVIRONMENT

The sports environment includes not only the weather, but also the facilities, surfaces and equipment that are being played on and with, as well as the “safety culture” in the sports club or organisation. Make sure you assess all these factors before play starts – a safe environment will reduce the number of potential injuries and should allow greater participation and enjoyment.

# Test the water before you jump in



## Indoor and outdoor facilities

### Check:

- The facilities are large enough for play
- Perimeter fencing and advertising boards are not too close to the playing area
- Spectators and vehicles are well away from the playing area
- Facilities are clean and hygienic.

## Playing surfaces

### Check:

- The ground is level
- There are no holes in the ground
- There are no exposed sprinkler heads
- There is no broken glass, rubbish or stones
- Excessively muddy and boggy areas are avoided
- Artificial surfaces are free of surface water and debris such as sand, gravel and leaves
- There are no water spills on the floor
- All playing surfaces have adequate lighting.

## Playing equipment

### Check:

- Equipment is regularly maintained
- Goal posts are padded

- Nets are attached securely to avoid entanglement
- Corner posts and marker flags will flex on impact and have no sharp edges
- Equipment is stable and will not fall over or collapse
- Equipment is suited to the players' size and ability.
- During wet and/or windy weather players wear waterproof or windproof tracksuits during training sessions and before and after a competition.

## Policy and report system

Make sure you have a system of monitoring and reporting potential and current hazards:

- Make individual people responsible for checking areas/equipment regularly
- Develop written policies to deal with issues such as postponement or cancellation appropriately and consistently.

## Always have an emergency procedure:

## Weather conditions

Players, coaches and referees need to be prepared for the weather conditions and any change that may happen during training or competition. Coaches should also be familiar with the signs of hypothermia and heat stress, especially those coaching children, who are more susceptible to extremes of weather.

### In warm weather conditions check:

- Clothing is light-coloured
- Clothing is loose-fitting
- Clothing is lightweight
- Players drink enough fluids
- Players apply sunscreen to all exposed skin
- Players wear hats if appropriate.

### In cold weather conditions check:

- Players wear adequate clothing during warm-up and cool-down
- Clothing is not excessively heavy or bulky to restrict movement
- Players wear polypropylene under the team uniform to reduce heat loss

- Ensure a qualified first aider is always at training and competition
- Check all playing fields/stadiums have emergency access and that these are always clear
- Check that a complete and well sign-posted first aid kit is always available
- Check that a phone is always available to contact emergency services
- Make sure coaches know the directions to your nearest Accident and Emergency (A & E) clinic
- Make sure all visiting teams know about the emergency procedures and where to find the first aid kit, phone and nearest A & E.

## SYMPTOMS OF HEAT STRESS

- Heavy sweating.
- Skin flushed or cool and pale.
- Headache.
- Dizziness.
- Muscle cramps.
- Weakness.
- Rapid pulse.
- Loss of consciousness (seek immediate help).

## SYMPTOMS OF HYPOTHERMIA

- Shivering (mild to intense).
- Weakness.
- Pale and waxy skin.
- Unco-ordinated movements.
- Confusion/agitation.
- Slow, slurred speech.
- Strange behaviour.
- Refusal of help.
- Slow, shallow breathing.

For more information on environment, refer to: **Health and Safety Guidelines in Sport** available from **SPARC (Sport and Recreation New Zealand)**; [www.sparc.org.nz](http://www.sparc.org.nz)

## THE 10-POINT ACTION PLAN FOR SPORTS INJURY PREVENTION

1  
SCREENING

2  
WARM-UP, COOL-DOWN  
AND STRETCH

3  
PHYSICAL CONDITIONING

4  
TECHNIQUE

5  
FAIR PLAY

6  
PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

7  
HYDRATION AND NUTRITION

8  
INJURY REPORTING

9  
ENVIRONMENT

10  
INJURY MANAGEMENT