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**May 29, 2023**

## Soccer Nova Scotia Air Quality Safety Guidelines

### These Guidelines:

Player health and safety is a high priority for SNS, and it is recommended to err on the side of caution if ever in doubt in any situation regarding the health and safety of participants.

1. Serve as a guide for leagues, member organizations, affiliates, team officials, players, and match officials.
2. Suggests what participants should consider in assessing air quality at local fields and awareness of potential health impacts, and
3. Provide additional information about the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) and where the AQHI can be found online.

The Air Quality Safety Guidelines are based on the [Air Quality Health Index \(AQHI\)](#).

The Air Quality Health Index uses a scale to show the health risk associated with the air pollution we breathe. It shows levels and forecasts for a number of NS. locations

The Air Quality Safety Guidelines recommend moderating scrimmages at AQHI of **4 to 6**, as well as providing additional information.

**Step 1** – go to [https://weather.gc.ca/airquality/pages/provincial\\_summary/ns\\_e.html](https://weather.gc.ca/airquality/pages/provincial_summary/ns_e.html) (there is also an app available). Note: use the NS website and links to NC cities/ towns

**Step 2** – find the location, note the station, time, date and index calculation. The index is normally updated hourly, at the top of the hour and suggested to use the index calculation that is within one hour of your scheduled kick-off or training time

### Step 3 – Monitoring Games and Tournaments

If the AQHI is still **above “7”** at the rescheduled kick-off time, the league, game or tournament organizer, and/or teams involved and the match official should consider delaying kick-off or cancelling the game

Important note: the match official (registered referee) reserves the final right to cancel the game if the conditions are considered dangerous in their opinion.

Referee to write on game sheet reason for abandonment with the Index calculation, time & date number calculated and AQHI station used.

If air quality changes dramatically during a game (e.g., a sudden smoke event caused by wind direction change), referees and team officials are advised to use their discretion. Record all decisions and relevant information on the game sheet.

## Step 4 – Monitoring training and Practices

Team officials should consider rescheduling practice or postponing practice until a later time

SUMMARY OF AIR QUALITY HEALTH MESSAGES BY CATEGORY			
HEALTH RISK	AIR QUALITY HEALTH INDEX	AT RISK POPULATION*	GENERAL POPULATION
LOW	1 - 3	Enjoy your usual outdoor activities	<b>Ideal</b> air quality for outdoor activities.
MODERATE	4 - 6	<b>Consider reducing</b> or rescheduling strenuous activities outdoors if you are experiencing symptoms.	<b>No need to modify</b> your usual outdoor activities unless you experience symptoms such as coughing and throat irritation.
HIGH	7 - 10	<b>Reduce or reschedule</b> strenuous activities outdoors. Children and the elderly should also take it easy.	<b>Consider reducing/ modifying or rescheduling strenuous</b> activities outdoors if you experience symptoms such as coughing and throat irritation. Longer rest and water breaks throughout the session.
VERY HIGH	ABOVE 10	<b>Avoid</b> strenuous activities outdoors. Children and the elderly should also avoid outdoor physical exertion.	<b>Reduce</b> or reschedule strenuous activities outdoors, especially if you experience symptoms such as coughing and throat irritation.

\*People with heart or breathing are at greater risk. Follow you doctor’s usual advice about exercises and managing your condition.

### What Does it Mean



If the AQHI value is low (1 to 3), plan outdoor activities.



If the AQHI value is moderate (4-6), reduce the intensity of the outdoor activities.



If the AQHI value is high (over 7), move the session indoors or reschedule to another time

### Additional Information

1. Health Canada recommends through the AQHI that for strenuous activities like soccer, anything above an AQHI of 7 then one should reschedule the event.
2. The AQHI treats anything above 10+ as “Very High” with health messages for the “general” and “at risk” populations to reschedule all outdoor activities – strenuous or not.
3. Elite athletes are in the “at-risk population because of the intensity and duration of exposure to outdoor air quality.” Women appear to be more affected than men due to smaller airways, lungs, and respiratory systems Regarding air quality, soccer is considered a high-exposure sport.
4. Individuals tend to rely on sensory perception to evaluate air quality when, in fact, the pollutants that present the greatest harm to human health are difficult to see or smell (e.g. ground-level ozone).
5. It is neither possible nor desirable to acclimatize athletes to air pollution. The US Olympic Committee recommends that when competing in high-pollution areas, the best strategy for training is alternative sites. “Stay away from air pollution.”

**AIR QUALITY**  
**AQHI - AIR QUALITY HEALTH INDEX**

**✓** IF THE AQHI VALUE IS LOW (1 TO 3) - PLAN OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

**—** IF THE AQHI VALUE IS MODERATE (4-6), REDUCE THE INTENSITY OF THE OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

**✗** IF THE AQHI VALUE IS HIGH (OVER 7), MOVE THE SESSION INDOORS OR RESCHEDULE TO ANOTHER TIME

**Air Quality Health Index**

RISK	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	+
LOW											
MODERATE											
HIGH											
VERY HIGH											

\*People with heart or breathing are at greater risk. Follow you doctor's usual advice about exercises and managing your condition.