

OPERATING IN HEAT & HUMIDITY

1. Context

There is no single, universally defined temperature at which equine events and activities should be stopped.

RDA UK monitors weather conditions and provides guidance for Groups attending events such as the National Championships in July at Hartpury, emphasizing the importance of acclimatisation and preparation for hot weather.

RDA UK's decision to halt or modify events due to heat is based on a combination of factors, including the Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) index, humidity, and how well acclimatised equines entered to take part are to the conditions.

RDA UK does not provide guidance to Groups associated with heat and humidity with regard to day to day operational activities at Group sites.

RDA South East Region does not provide Guidance to Groups associated with heat and humidity with regard to day to day operational activities at Group sites.

This guidance statement is for Bradbourne RDA Group with regard to regular operational activities undertaken at its base at Bradbourne Riding and Training Centre, and when Bradbourne RDA Group is considering any offsite operational activities with the Group's equines and/or participants supported by the Group's volunteers.

2. Policy Statement

The underlying principle is that Bradbourne RDA Group will not expose equines and people to unnecessary health risks possible through extreme hot weather.

If the Met Office issues an **Amber weather warning** of extreme heat encompassing the Bradbourne area, the Group will suspend operations. All coaches, participants and volunteers will be notified by central communications, and coaches of cancelled sessions are to organise pony checks and care for what would have been their operational session times.

If the Met Office issues an **Amber weather warning** of extreme heat encompassing an area where the Group was intending to take equines and people for offsite activities, the Group will cancel involvement in those offsite activities. The relevant coach(es) will be notified by central communications, and agreement over the appropriate person to inform the external site/event organizer as relevant will be jointly made.

Where no Met Office warnings are issued but general weather forecast temperatures are expected to be above 25°C / 77°F in the Sevenoaks area, the Group will refer to the Met Office 'Feels Like' data for the Sevenoaks area, which is equivalent to the Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) index.

The WBGT, taken in the sun, measuring the effects of temperature, humidity, wind, sun angle and cloud cover, encompasses a fuller health risk than the Heat Index which also covers heat and humidity but does not take into account heating from direct sunlight, physical activity or wind cool.

Where the Met Office 'Feels Like' reading is below 27°C / 80°F BRDA operations will continue as usual.

Where the Met Office 'Feels Like' reading is between 27°C / 80°F and 30°C / 86°F BRDA operations may continue, but specific session coaches may cancel their session knowing their participants and how temperatures may impact their health, and which ponies would usually support the session.

Where the Met Office 'Feels Like' reading is above 30°C / 86°F BRDA operations will be suspended. All coaches, participants and volunteers will be notified by central communications, and coaches of cancelled sessions are to organise pony checks and care for what would have been their operational session times.

3. Welfare considerations

During periods of hot or hot and humid weather, coaches to ensure time is allowed in the session planning for welfare considerations for the equines, their team members, participants and themselves.

3.1. Equines

Lesson plans – to incorporate lower levels of activity than expected during regular temperatures as the equines are not acclimatized for working in hot and humid weather.

Cooling equines – after riding or carriage driving sessions, equines to be cooled with water: hosed or buckets, subject to local landlord restrictions.

Hydration – ensuring at all times equines have plentiful supplies of water when in the pony shelter or stables, allowing the potential for some to drink double their normal water intake.

Suncream – to be applied to all white muzzles before turning out.

Flymasks – where specifically agreed for an equine. Not routinely required for BRDA equines.

3.2. People

All participants/primary contacts for participants, adult volunteers, and primary contacts for volunteers under 18, need to make their own decisions about participation in consideration of their own health circumstances and situation.

Those attending to be encouraged to remain in shade where possible, and permitted to obtain water from the clubhouse at appropriate times during the sessions to keep hydrated.

Participants may proactively contact the Group to advise the need to stay away due to the heat when the Group has confirmed it is continuing with operations. Such cancellations made outside of Group Terms & Conditions due to unexpected changing weather conditions may not be chargeable.