



## **VPCI: Extreme Weather Conditions and Duty of Care**

Petanque is a very safe sport. However incidents and accidents do occur. So PFA have provided insurance cover for all PFA licensed players.

This essentially means that all PFA licensed petanque players, plus all bone-fide visitors (who may be required to contact VPCI or PFA for permission to play; or hold a PFA Day Licence) who take part in petanque events and tournaments organised by the PFA, by the VPCI or by a club affiliated with the PFA are covered by the PFA insurance policy. All such petanque event are, by definition, PFA sanctioned events.

However, this does not mean that clubs and players are devoid of all responsibility for their actions. All petanque players and officials present have a duty of care to themselves, to other players and to members of the general public that may be in the vicinity when playing in a PFA sanctioned event.

We are not experts in insurance and risk management but we have put together a set of recommendations that we think may be helpful when organising or playing in a petanque event.

Please note that if you play in a petanque event that is not sanctioned by the PFA, then the PFA insurance policy is not applicable in the case of an accident.

Occurrences that should never be tolerated during a PFA sanctioned event is glass drinking receptacles being taken onto the piste and players wearing inadequate footwear that leaves toes and other parts of the foot uncovered. These are expressly prohibited by PFA rules and regulations.

VPCI recommend that on the days before an event:

1. If the forecast for the event day contains a Code Red warning for the region where the event is to take place then the host club and/or tournament organiser should warn registered players and others it can reasonably contact that the event will be cancelled or postponed if the Code Red conditions are in place for that day of the petanque event.
2. A similar warning should go out if the shade temperature is predicted to be above 35°C.
3. The host club should ensure that if the event is to take place in a remote region that mobile phone coverage (or similar) is available so that assistance can be summoned directly in the case of an accident.
4. Regardless of the predicted temperature the host club should advise all players to wear adequate protective clothing, and ensure that potable water (tap or bottled) and 50+ sun-block lotion is available at no charge to all players and officials.

VPCI recommend that before play commences on the day of an event:

1. The event/Tournament Organiser, together with the Tournament Umpire (if relevant) undertakes a risk assessment to ensure that there are no obvious threats to players. Things that may impinge on a safe tournament about to commence are strong winds where the playing area has overhead power lines and nearby trees – especially many native varieties, nearby electric storms, local heavy rain and other possible extreme weather conditions forecast for later in the day. If, in their opinion, any such extreme event is likely they should either postpone the event or warn the players that play may be postponed later in the day.
2. If the shade temperature at the start of play is below 36°C but is forecast to get to that or above then the event/Tournament Organiser, together with the Tournament Umpire (if relevant) should advise all players that the event will be postponed or cancelled if the temperature reaches 36°C.

VPCI recommends that during play on the day of an event:

1. If the temperature reaches 36°C then the event/Tournament Organiser, along with the Tournament Umpire (if relevant) will confer and stop the event at the conclusion of that end and advise players to that effect, and indicate a re-start time.
2. In the event of any of the following the event should be immediately postponed (players are not to complete the current end) – an electrical storm or wind gusts deemed strong enough to bring down power lines or tree branches in the vicinity of the playing area.

Please remember that the broad guidelines here need to be treated with common sense, as what is tolerable for a young fit person may be more stressful for an older person. Determinations about starting play or continuing play should never discriminate against the older and less fit players.

If some (or all) players insist on continuing to play after a reasonable decision is made by a host club and/or Tournament Organiser and/or Tournament Umpire to recommend play should cease then a host club official or the Tournament Organiser/Umpire should point out to those players that continuing to play is then totally the responsibility of the individuals who play on, and that they put at risk access to the PFA insurance cover if some incident or accident occurs.

On days of forecast high temperatures organisers may give thought to commencing the event at an earlier time (if all players can get there on time) in order to complete as much as possible of the event before the temperature exceeds 35°C. Pre-registration of players in events during periods of likely hot weather may allow an earlier start.

Tournament organisers should also give thought to events that run over 2 days and/or where players may have booked accommodation and flight in order to get to the event. Again starting play early and recommencing after a hot spell in the early evenings are possible options.

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