



Safety Alert - Heat Illness at Competitions

We should assume that the heatwaves in summer will become the new normal. This is an effect of Global climate change. Heat Illness can become a life-threatening condition.

Please consider the following protections: -

- avoid the hot periods of the day
- minimise the time that people are held in the sun afloat
- provide shaded areas on land
- provide plenty of drinking water and encourage people to remain hydrated
- provide First Aid facilities equipped to deal with hyperthermia (see below)
- rotate umpires, officials and safety staff regularly during competition.
- have a 'cool area' to take people with early symptoms. ,
- have a planned response to someone with suspected heat related illness.

Help people suffering from Heat Illness by-

- Moving them to a cool place in the shade
- Removing unnecessary clothing,
- Spraying them with water
- Giving them plenty of water to drink,
- Positioning them in a breeze or use a fan
- Applying bags containing ice wrapped in a cloth or towel to their neck, armpits and groin (these areas are close to major blood vessels so that the "Coolness" can be transmitted through the body) and
- Staying with the casualty until they recover,

Have a plentiful supply of ice in insulated boxes.

If someone becomes distressed or does not recover within 30 minutes, or if you are concerned about their condition then phone 999. They may have developed Heatstroke, and this is a medical emergency.

Register with [Heat-health Alert service - Met Office](#) to receive hot (and cold) weather warnings.

There is further information here: -

Section 8.2 of [RowSafe](#) deals with Sunburn, Heat Illness and Exhaustion.

Section 9.1 contains Risk Management advice on the effects of the weather

[Safety-Alert-Avoiding-and-Treating-Heat-Exhaustion-July-2022-2.pdf](#)

[Safety-Alert-How-to-stay-safe-whilest-rowing-in-the-sun.pdf](#)

Take care of all the people at your competition.

Stephen Worley
Honorary Rowing Safety Adviser
safety@britishrowing.org

July 2026

[This Safety Alert is a safety guidance document. Please read our safety message and disclaimer.](#)