

Red Shed Inc. Weather Response Plan

Effective Date: 01/06/2024

Review Date: 01/06/2025

Purpose:

Red Shed Inc. prioritises the safety of all employees, members, and visitors during on-water activities, such as rowing and other lake-based programs. This Weather Response Plan outlines procedures to mitigate risks related to adverse weather conditions, ensuring a timely and effective response to dangerous situations that could affect lake usage.

Scope:

This plan applies to all Red Shed Inc. employees, members, visitors, and contractors involved in on-water activities. It covers weather events such as thunderstorms, high winds, extreme heat, and other hazardous conditions that could compromise safety on the lake.

Policy Statement:

Red Shed Inc. is committed to ensuring the safety of all participants during on-water activities by monitoring weather conditions and responding appropriately to any weather-related threats. Activities will be adjusted, postponed, or cancelled when weather conditions pose a risk to participants.

1. Responsibilities

1.1 Management Responsibilities:

- Regularly monitor weather forecasts, lake conditions, and real-time weather alerts from reliable sources (e.g., Bureau of Meteorology, Weatherzone).
- Establish clear communication protocols to inform staff and members of weather-related cancellations or modifications to activities.
- Provide training to all staff on how to respond to dangerous weather situations, including procedures for evacuating the lake and securing equipment.
- Ensure that adequate safety equipment is available, including life jackets, radios, and emergency kits, for use during on-water activities.

1.2 Employee Responsibilities:

- Follow the weather response procedures outlined in this plan and remain alert to changing weather conditions during on-water activities.
- Conduct visual assessments of the lake and surrounding weather before each session to ensure safe conditions.
- Implement immediate safety measures, such as cancelling or evacuating on-water activities, when weather hazards are identified.
- Communicate weather risks and decisions to participants promptly and clearly.

1.3 Participant Responsibilities:

- Adhere to instructions provided by staff related to weather safety during on-water activities.
- Ensure proper personal safety equipment, such as life jackets and weather-appropriate clothing, is worn where appropriate.
- Inform staff of any weather concerns or unsafe conditions they observe while participating in on-water activities.

2. Weather Monitoring and Assessment

2.1 Weather Monitoring:

- Weather conditions will be monitored regularly by staff using reliable weather sources, including the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM), Lake Burley Griffin Authority updates, and local real-time weather apps (e.g., Weatherzone).
- Staff will pay particular attention to:
 - Wind speeds exceeding 15-20 knots (28-37 km/h), which can create rough water conditions unsafe for rowing and other water sports.
 - Storm activity such as lightning, hail, or thunderstorms in the vicinity.
 - Heatwaves or high temperatures (above 35°C) that may cause heat exhaustion or dehydration.
 - Heavy rain leading to reduced visibility, poor water quality, or increased risk of hypothermia.

2.2 Lake and Weather Assessment:

- A pre-activity assessment will be conducted before each on-water session to evaluate the lake conditions, checking for factors such as:
 - Water choppiness due to wind or boat traffic.
 - Cloud cover and visibility.
 - Storm activity or signs of an incoming weather front.

3. Weather Hazard Response Procedures

3.1 Response to Windy Conditions:

Wind Speeds of 15-20 Knots (28-37 km/h): On-water activities will be restricted to experienced rowers only, with close monitoring. Less experienced rowers will be directed to indoor rowing machines or other alternative activities.

Wind Speeds Exceeding 20 Knots (37 km/h): All on-water activities will be cancelled. Staff will immediately inform participants and direct them off the water and into the shed or a safe indoor location.

3.2 Response to Storms and Lightning:

- Thunderstorm Warning or Visible Lightning: All on-water activities will be cancelled or stopped immediately. Participants will be evacuated from the water, and all boats must return to shore as quickly and safely as possible.
- If lightning is observed within 10 kilometres (a flash-to-bang count of 30 seconds or less), participants and staff must stay away from the water and seek shelter indoors for at least 30 minutes after the last lightning strike.
- Metal equipment, including boats, should be secured away from open areas to reduce lightning risks.

3.3 Response to Extreme Heat:

- On-water activities will be limited or cancelled when temperatures exceed 35°C to avoid heat exhaustion and dehydration risks.
- Staff will ensure participants are hydrated and wearing appropriate sun protection (sunscreen, hats, UV-protective clothing).
- Where possible, sessions will be rescheduled to early morning or late afternoon to avoid the peak heat of the day.

3.4 Response to Heavy Rain or Poor Visibility:

- On-water activities will be cancelled if heavy rain reduces visibility, creates unsafe boating conditions, or significantly lowers water quality.
- Alternative indoor activities will be offered when on-water sessions are cancelled due to rain.

4. Emergency Protocols

4.1 Immediate Evacuation Procedure:

- In the event of sudden hazardous weather (e.g., a fast-moving storm, sudden high winds), staff will initiate an immediate evacuation of the water.
- All participants will be instructed to row or paddle to the nearest shoreline as quickly and safely as possible.
- Staff will ensure that everyone disembarks safely, and that all equipment is properly secured.
- Participants will be directed to a safe indoor area (such as the Red Shed facility) to wait until conditions improve or until it is safe to leave.

4.2 Communication with Emergency Services:

- If any participant is injured or in distress during adverse weather, staff will contact emergency services (000) immediately.
- First aid will be administered by trained personnel while waiting for emergency services, and all emergency protocols (as outlined in Red Shed's First Aid Policy) will be followed.



5. Communication Plan

5.1 Notification of Weather Cancellations:

- Participants will be notified of any changes or cancellations due to weather via email, SMS, or the Red Shed Inc. app at least 30 minutes before the scheduled session, whenever possible.
- If an activity is cancelled due to immediate dangerous conditions, participants will be informed on-site, and the decision will be communicated promptly by staff.

5.2 On-Site Communication:

- Staff will carry radios or mobile phones to communicate quickly with each other and participants in case of sudden weather changes during on-water activities.
- Clear instructions on how to exit the water safely and where to gather will be communicated to all participants before each session.

6. Policy Review and Compliance

6.1 Compliance:

- Employees and participants must follow the safety measures and weather response protocols outlined in this plan. Non-compliance may result in exclusion from activities or disciplinary action for employees.

6.2 Review:

- This Weather Response Plan will be reviewed annually or after any major weather event to ensure its continued effectiveness and alignment with safety standards.
- Feedback from staff, members, and participants will be taken into consideration to improve the plan.

This policy has been approved by

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Position: President

Date: 01/06/2024

Contact Information:

For questions or concerns regarding first aid at Red Shed, please contact admin@redshed.org.au or 0447 137 111.