Heat Illness and What to Do

⚠ **Heat Cramps:** Painful, involuntary muscle spasms (usually occurring in the legs) associated with exercise in the heat when athletes have been sweating profusely.

What to do: Stop activity and rest in cool area. Consume salty food or beverages.

⚠ **Heat Exhaustion:** Inability to sustain exercise in the heat due to cardiovascular strain. Signs and symptoms include: fatigue, weakness, nausea, light-headedness, headache, heavy sweating, dehydration, decreased muscle coordination, and chills.

What to do: Stop activity and rest in cool area. Rehydrate. Remove excess clothing and cool the athlete with ice-wet towels. Improvement is seen usually within 10-15 minutes. If exertional heat stroke is suspected, have a medical professional take rectal temperature to confirm diagnosis.

⚠ **Exertional Heat Stroke:** Occurs when (1) the rectal temperature is ≥104°F and (2) there are signs/symptoms of central nervous system (CNS) dysfunction. Signs and symptoms of CNS dysfunction include: irrational behavior, emotional instability, confusion, nausea, diarrhea, loss of muscle coordination, collapse, heavy sweating. **THIS IS A MEDICAL EMERGENCY.**

What to do: Stop activity and aggressively cool the patient using cold water tub. Activate emergency medical service, but always cool first and transport second. Remove excess clothes. Continuously monitor the rectal temperature until it is cooled down to 102°F.

Information provided by the Korey Stringer Institute http://ksi.uconn.edu

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www.heatstress.com

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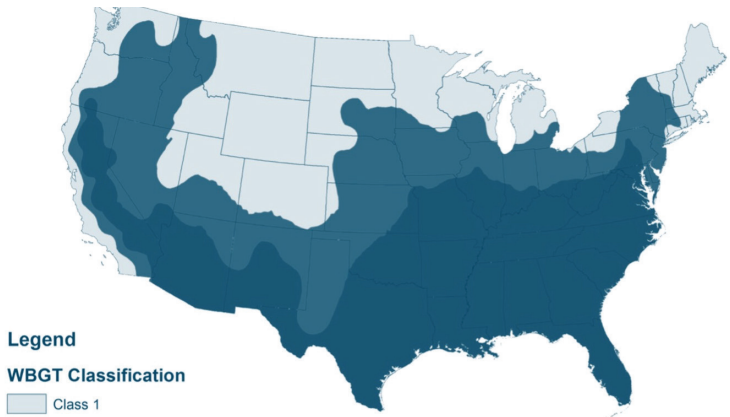
UIL Texas Heat Stress Guidelines



Source: UIL Heat Stress & Athletic Participation Recommended Plan, www.uiltexas.org/health/info/2026-2027-heat-stress-athletic-participation-required-plan

Training & Match Play Limits

Determine which region WBGT classification you are in based on the map.

Cancellation of Training

No outdoor workouts. Delay practices until a cooler WBGT is reached.

Class 2 ≥89.8°F	Class 3 ≥92.1°F

Find your alert level and activity guidelines that dictate modifications in activity (work: rest ratios, hydration breaks, equipment worn, length of practice):

WBGT Activity Guidelines		
Class 3	**Class 2**	**Activity Guidelines**
< 82.0	**<79.7**	Normal Activities - Provide at least three separate rest breaks each hour with a minimum duration of 3 min each during the workout.
82.0 - 86.9	**79.7 - 84.6**	Use discretion for intense or prolonged exercise; Provide at least three separate rest breaks each hour with a minimum duration of 4 min each. MANDATORY ONSITE RAPID COOLING ZONE (INCLUDING TUB OR TARP)
87.0 - 90.0	**84.7 - 87.6**	Maximum practice time is 2 hours; **For Football**: players are restricted to helmet, shoulder pads, and shorts during practice. If the WBGT rises to this level during practice, players may continue to work out wearing football pants without changing to shorts. **For All Sports**: Provide at least four separate rest breaks each hour with a minimum duration of 4 min each. MANDATORY ONSITE RAPID COOLING ZONE (INCLUDING TUB OR TARP)
90.1 - 92.0	**87.7 - 89.7**	Maximum practice time is 1 hour; **For Football**: No protective equipment may be worn during practice, and there may be no conditioning activities. **For All Sports**: There must be 20 min of rest breaks distributed throughout the hour of practice. MANDATORY ONSITE RAPID COOLING ZONE (INCLUDING TUB OR TARP)
≥92.1	**≥89.8**	No outdoor workouts. Delay practices until a cooler WBGT is reached.

Values in the above chart are WBGT measurements (not temperature or heat index measurements).

Source: www.uiltexas.org/health/info/2026-2027-heat-stress-athletic-participation-required-plan

Emergency Action Plans & Procedures for the Prevention of Heat Related Illness

Each member school's emergency action plan must include procedures to address heat emergencies that include onsite rapid cooling using cold-water immersion or equivalent means.

Rapid cooling zones must be available for each outdoor athletic and marching band contest, practice, workout, or conditioning session that is held in wet bulb globe temperatures of 79.7 in Class 2 or 82 in Class 3 degrees or higher. Rapid cooling zones are required to have immediate availability of cold-water immersion tubs or tarps that can be filled with ice and water and wrapped around individuals to rapidly cool internal body temperature (TACO method) and are encouraged to include a combination of the following options: ice sponges, towels, water misters, and shade. The presence of an employee or volunteer trained to administer cold-water immersion is recommended.

Coaches and directors must adopt a heat injury prevention philosophy by promoting unrestricted access to water at all times and a student- athlete should never be denied access to water.

Rest breaks must involve unlimited hydration intake and rest without any activity involved.

Source: www.uiltexas.org/health/info/2026-2027-heat-stress-athletic-participation-required-plan

!! WARNING!!

These WBGT Reference Guidelines are summarized from published papers, policies, and position statements relating to preventing heat injury. These guidelines provide a reference as to danger zones but do not constitute or take the place of medical advice.

The Kestrel Heat Stress Tracker is an environmental meter, not a medical device, and must be employed correctly according to these instructions to ensure accurate readings. Always let the instrument equilibrate to the environment you are in.

These guidelines, and your Kestrel Heat Stress Tracker, must be employed with care and good judgment. Remember that certain individuals are more susceptible to exertional heat stress and may suffer injury before a Zone Threshold is reached. When in doubt, set your Zone Thresholds lower, reduce work time, and increase rest, hydration and access to shade. Have and practice a heat injury emergency action plan, ensure ready access to cooling equipment such as ice baths and chilled sheets, and always intervene when any individual appears disoriented, weak or ill.