



Severe Weather Cancellation Guidance

As a club Maidenhead AC (MAC) has a duty of care to its members for their safety and welfare during club sessions. Sometimes severe weather conditions can mean that a session which includes, but is not limited to, junior and senior track or field sessions, senior social road runs, other social events taking place outside may have to be cancelled.

We have risk assessments in place which already state what mitigations should be in place for identified risks which include weather conditions and these are always the first line of decision making. However, weather conditions are admittedly difficult to judge and decide if a cancellation, which is the highest level of mitigation, is necessary. This guidance is to support the coaches or route masters who typically must make these decisions.

Other factors to consider when cancelling are:

Have any government 'severe weather warning'/'risk to life' advice been issued? If so, then we must follow this guidance.

What is our governing body advice? UKA has some guidance to support here: www.uka.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Heat-and-Cold-related-guidance-V1-240918.pdf.

To make a cancellation decision you must:

Go to the track, route or other venue and assess the conditions for its safe use according to the weather being experienced and the risk assessment in place.

You should also check the suitability of an alternative venue/route before deciding to switch.

Use the weather report for the time the session is due to happen.

Route masters - if you cannot risk assess a whole route you should not use it.

Make the decision with the interests of the whole group in mind who vary in fitness level, age and ability but also yourself as the coach*.

If you have any doubts that a session, route or venue is safe or could be safely adapted/changed in the event of severe/extreme weather conditions, then the default is to cancel.



Types of severe weather general guidance

Heavy Rain

The main issue with heavy rain is damaging the track surface by running on it, injuries when using equipment or the grass when wet, slipping over on road runs or limited visibility.

What to look out for in terms of the track use:

- It has been raining constantly for a few days so the track hasn't had the chance to drain.
- The rain has been extremely heavy for most of the day.
- Surface water spans the full width of the track or excessive water in lane one.
- When you stand on it your feet sink into it as though it was porridge.

Most of the time we wouldn't need to cancel a Tuesday track session as we have the tab on the rota with session ideas for alternative venues. Most road runs are likely fine but please consider route choice and how much excess water may be on the route and temperature if members get wet. Junior training may need to be cancelled if we do not have an indoor venue available or suitable venue alternative.

Ice/Snow

Fairly straight forward cancellation unless you can be certain you can put some mitigations in place to avoid any icy patches on the track or ice can be clearly seen and avoided on a route or at an alternative venue. Any sessions in the dark when ice, particularly black ice is prevalent, should be cancelled.

Other things to consider are:

Would fast intervals really be appropriate when potentially the temperatures are below 5°C?

How appropriate is it for juniors to be training outside in temperatures below 5°C

How would you feel standing out in the cold for an hour? Your needs are as important as the members!

Heat

Probably the most difficult decision because increasing temperatures is something we have got to learn to deal with or we'll end up doing nothing and everybody (as with the cold) has different reactions to heat and what is too hot!

- 30°C+ is a definite cancel



- The 5ks reps have asked that if they cancel their 5k we do not offer an alternative club session because it undermines their decision to cancel.

Things to consider:

Would you want to be stood for an hour in the heat?

Is there an alternative venue/route in the shade that also has some air flow?

Can we offer a later session or session on a different day to make up for a cancellation.

Can you just offer a short reps session? With adaptations to the short reps session on the track to use the shade side with reduced intensity and a very clear brief to members to take their own fitness and susceptibility to heat into consideration before attending?

Can you offer a much shorter run route? Again, with the above brief to members.

Junior sessions: please consider the above but remember that juniors cannot necessarily make an informed choice about their own welfare. If we offer a session in the heat, then we must take regular shade/water breaks and give parents the option to not send their young person to train.

Thunder or Lightning

Consider risk to life being outside in lightning particularly if using equipment such as javelins.

What time should we cancel?

Please aim to have make a cancellation (or change of venue) decision as early as possible before the start of the session you are cancelling but only once you have completed your risk assessment.

Realistically we are volunteers and most of us work during the day so if we can't make the decision until we get to the track/venue (or must make a decision earlier in the day) then it can't be helped.

Risk assessment is dynamic and you are within your rights to cancel at the last minute or even during a session if conditions change since your initial decision was made.

Likewise, we will all make the wrong decision to cancel from time to time, and the weather or conditions are not as bad as expected. You can only work off the facts that you have in front of you at the time you are assessing the risks and make the decision.

**The term 'coach' also refers to run leaders (LiRFS) and in the case of senior social runs route masters who plan and share the run routes as sanctioned by the committee.*