Houston ISD Cold Weather Guidelines

A safety threat exits when the physically active cannot maintain heat. Cold exposure can be uncomfortable, impair performance, increase injury risk and may be life threatening. Cold weather is defined as any temperature that can negatively affect the body’s regulatory system. These do not have to be freezing temperatures. The following temperature guidelines have been established for Houston ISD Athletic Department practices and games. The Director of Athletic reserves the right to modify or cancel games due to extreme weather on a case by case basis.

**Cold Weather Practice and Game Recommendations:**

**Wind Chill Temperature ABOVE 36°**
- Normal Practice just monitor high risk athletes

**33°-35° with Precipitation**
- No more than 40 minutes outside per session, may return outside after 10 – 20 minutes indoor

**32° or below with Precipitation**
- No Outside Practice or Game

**35° - 40° without Precipitation**
- No more than 1 hour outside per session, may return outside after 10 – 20 minutes indoors

**30° - 34° without Precipitation**
- No more than 30 minutes outside per session, may return outside after 10 - 20 minutes indoors

**30° or Below without Precipitation**
- No Outside Practice or Game
The wind chill temperature is how cold people and animals feel when outside. Wind chill is based on the rate of heat loss from exposed skin caused by wind and cold. As the wind increases, it draws heat from the body, driving down skin temperature and eventually the internal body temperature. Therefore, the wind makes it FEEL much colder and poses a more severe threat to our bodies.

**Cold Exposure Can Be Life Threatening; Know the Signs:**

There are two cold-related pathologies that coaches, administrators and athletes should be aware of: hypothermia and frostbite.

1. **Hypothermia** is defined as a decrease in the core body temperature to at least 95 degrees F. It occurs when the heat loss is greater than the metabolic and heat production. Hypothermia can be categorized in three stages: mild, moderate and severe, based on core body temperature.
2. **Frostbite** is a thermal injury to the skin, which can result from prolonged exposure to moderate cold or brief exposure to extreme cold. The body areas most prone to frostbite are the hands, feet nose, ears and cheeks.

For more information and signs on these two conditions, please refer to the UIL Athletic Health and Safety website under **Cold Weather Illness.**