



## Softball BC Air Quality Safety Guidelines

Player health and safety is a high priority for Softball BC, thus it is recommended to err on the side of caution if ever in doubt in any situation regarding the health and safety of players, coaches and officials.

These guidelines:

1. Serve as guidance for member organizations, coaches, players, and umpires with Softball BC
2. suggests what members, including coaches, players, umpires and club officials should consider in assessing air quality at local diamonds and awareness of potential health impacts, and
3. Provide additional information about the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) and where the AQHI can be found online.

### Guidelines

**Step 1** – go to [https://weather.gc.ca/airquality/pages/provincial\\_summary/bc\\_e.html](https://weather.gc.ca/airquality/pages/provincial_summary/bc_e.html) (APP also available, see resources).

Note: use the BC website and links to BC cities.

**Step 2** – find the location; note the station, time, and date, and index calculation.

Note: index is normally updated hourly (at the top of the hour) and suggested to use the index calculation that is within one hour of scheduled game or practice time.

### Step 3 – Games and Tournaments

If the AQHI is “7” or higher recommended to postpone / reschedule or if necessary, cancel games or tournament.

If the AQHI is still above “7” at the rescheduled start time, tournament director (or team officials if a league game) and umpires should consider delaying or cancelling the game.

Important note: the UIC or Umpire in Charge reserves the final right to cancel the game if the conditions are considered dangerous, in their opinion.

If air quality changes dramatically during a game (e.g. sudden smoke event caused by wind direction change) umpires and team/tournament officials are advised to use their discretion.

### Step 3 – Training and Practices

Team officials should consider a rescheduled practice or postponing practice until a later time.

### Incorporating Air Quality calculations into Soccer Activity

1. Incorporating AQHI into your training practices
  - a. Access the latest AQHI calculations
  - b. If air quality is “3” or below continue with practice as normal.
  - c. If air quality is an index of 4 – 6 then be prepared to adjust the practice by:



- Reducing the intensity.
  - Reducing the duration of the practice.
  - Providing resting periods.
- d. If air quality is “7” or above reschedule.
2. Be aware of weather and other conditions:
- a. Current forest fires and their locations in the province.
  - b. Local burning of stubble on fields or agricultural fields – these can increase particulate matter in the air without impacting the AQHI for a city.
  - c. Sudden and dramatic changes in wind strength and direction.
  - d. Proximity of any major road or highway.
  - e. Near or downwind of any industrial areas or other significant emission sources.
3. BC Health Services maintains an Air Quality Advisory website. This site is helpful for planning your outdoor event. <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/bcairquality/readings/aqhi-table.xml>

#### **Additional Information**

1. Health Canada recommends through the AQHI that for strenuous activities like softball, anything above an AQHI of 7, then one should reschedule the event.
2. The AQHI treats anything above 10+ as “Very High” with health messages for the “general” and “at risk” populations to reschedule all outdoor activities – strenuous or not.
3. Elite athletes are in the “at-risk population because of the intensity and duration of exposure to outdoor air quality.” Women appear to be more affected than men due to smaller airways, lungs, and respiratory systems. Regarding air quality, softball is considered a high exposure sport.
4. Individuals tend to rely on sensory perception to evaluate air quality when, in fact, the pollutants that present the greatest harm to human health are difficult to see or smell (e.g. ground level ozone).