

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2022 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 4713

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[Introduced February 15, 2022; Referred to the
Committee on Health and Human Resources then
Education]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding thereto a new section,
2 designated §18-2-25e, relating to requiring athletic associations and sports entities of
3 West Virginia to adopt and implement a “Heat and Humidity Practice Policy” for all outdoor
4 organized athletic and competitive events held within the state.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 2. STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

§18-2-25e. Heat and humidity practice policy.

1 (a) Beginning on January 1, 2023, the athletic association and sports entities of West
2 Virginia shall adopt and implement a “Heat and Humidity Practice Policy” set forth in this section
3 for all outdoor organized athletic and competitive events held within the state.

4 (b) *Heat Participation Policy Guidelines.* – Each athletic association or sports entity who
5 sponsors athletic activity must develop a “Heat and Humidity Policy” which follows best practice
6 policies when conducting practices, competitions, walk throughs, and strength and conditioning
7 sessions for all sports. The policy must follow the best practice exertional heat illness guidelines
8 and be submitted to the athletic association or sports entity in regard to:

9 (1) The modification of athletic activity based on environmental conditions using a Wet
10 Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) device.

11 (2) Athletic associations and sports entities must purchase a Wet Bulb Globe Temperature
12 (WBGT) tool to measure the heat at the practice site. Heat stress consists of temperature,
13 humidity, wind speed, the angle of the sun, and cloud coverage.

14 (3) An instrument scientifically approved to measure WBGT must be utilized at each
15 athletic activity. All WBGT readings shall be recorded on the activity site a minimum of every 30
16 minutes, beginning 30 minutes before the beginning of the activity. The athletic association and
17 sports entities of West Virginia are responsible for documenting, recording, or data logging (i.e.,
18 written, or electronic form) WBGT readings for all athletic activities to include the following:

19 (A) The heat acclimatization of athletes during times of various WBGT levels;

20 (B) The hydration and rest breaks during times of various WBGT levels; and

21 (C) The recognition and treatment of any exertional heat illness that occurs during any
22 organized athletic and competitive events that follow best practice recommendations.

23 (c) A default policy concerning the implementation of modifications or cancellation of
24 practices and contests based on the presence of heat and humidity. In the event that a
25 modification or cancellation was required, documentation is required.

26 (d) Definitions. – For this section:

27 “Athletic activity” means any organized athletic, recreational athletic activity, music activity,
28 or cheer activity that requires physical strength, agility, flexibility, speed, stamina, or range of
29 motion. This includes practices, competitions, walk throughs, and strength and conditioning
30 sessions.

31 “Athletic Associations” mean any entity within the state that sponsors organized athletic
32 and competitive events to include the West Virginia Secondary Schools Activities Commission,
33 collegiate institutions, nationally sanctioned organizations, state level organizations, select team
34 organizations, county activity organizations, city organizations, and private sports entities.

35 “Best practice” means policies and procedures that are accepted or prescribed by
36 professionals as being the most current, correct, and effective.

37 “Game” means any athletic event sponsored by a sporting entity or athletic association.

38 “Heat acclimatization” means the improvement in heat tolerance that comes from
39 gradually increasing the intensity or duration of activity while performed in a hot setting.

40 “National Association” means any of the following organizations recognized with
41 developing best practices policy: National Athletic Trainings Association, National Federation of
42 State High School Associations, or American College of Sports Medicine.

43 “Practice” means the period of time that a participant engages in coach-supervised,
44 sporting association-approved or entity-approved sport or conditioning-related activity. Practices
45 are timed from the time the players report to the field until they leave.

46 “Sports entity” means any individual, group or association that provides or oversees
47 organized athletic and competitive events.

48 “Strength and conditioning session” means any activity where a participant engages in
49 physical exercise such as, but not limited to, strength training or conditioning sessions and is
50 sponsored by a sporting entity or athletic association.

51 “Walk through” means a period of time that is not considered to be a part of the practice
52 time regulation and may not involve conditioning or weight-rom activities and is sponsored by a
53 sporting entity or athletic association. Players may not wear protective equipment.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to require that athletic associations and sports entities of West Virginia to adopt and implement a “Heat and Humidity Practice Policy” for all organized athletic and competitive events held within the state; and providing definitions.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law, and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.