



PA Position Statement

Boosting and Autonomic Dysreflexia

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Version 1

1. Autonomic Dysreflexia and Boosting

Paralympics Australia (PA) acknowledges and supports the International Paralympic Committee's (IPC) position on autonomic dysreflexia and boosting. PA is dedicated to ensuring the health, safety, and fair competition of all athletes by adhering to these guidelines.

2. Understanding Autonomic Dysreflexia

Autonomic dysreflexia is a potentially life-threatening condition that can affect athletes with spinal cord damage, particularly those with cervical or high thoracic lesions (T6 or above). This condition is characterised by an excessive sympathetic nervous system response to stimuli below the level of injury.

Common triggers include distension (or irritation) of the bladder or bowel, or intense skin stimulation. Clinical signs and symptoms include a rapid increase in blood pressure, severe headache, sweating, skin blotchiness, and goosebumps. In extreme cases, it can lead to confusion, seizures, cerebral haemorrhage(stroke), or even death.

3. Boosting: A Prohibited Practice

Boosting is the act of intentionally eliciting autonomic dysreflexia in order to enhance athletic performance. Boosting is banned due to its serious health risks and ethical implications.

4. Regulatory Measures and Health Monitoring

In alignment with the IPC's position statement, Paralympics Australia acknowledges a systolic blood pressure threshold of 160 mmHg as being consistent with a diagnosis of Autonomic Dysreflexia. Any relevant athlete found to have a systolic blood pressure above this limit will be assessed medically, and the blood pressure measured again after approximately 10 minutes (as per the IPC Position Statement). If the athlete's systolic blood pressure remains greater than 160 mmHg, the athlete will be deemed ineligible for competition to prevent potential health complications and referred for further medical assessment and treatment.

5. Commitment to Athlete Safety and Fair Play.

Paralympics Australia is committed to implementing and enforcing measures that protect our athletes' health and promote fair competition. Boosting not

only poses severe health risks but also compromises the integrity of Para-sports.

6. Misconduct

Paralympics Australia encourages compliance with the IPC position statement by all athletes and team officials at all levels of Para-sport. Any breaches will be handled under PA or NSO integrity policies, dependant on jurisdiction.

For more detailed information, please refer to the IPC's position statement on autonomic dysreflexia and boosting, accessible [here](#).