



LOCAL REGULATIONS ARE YOUR PRIMARY COVID-19 GUIDANCE TO ENSURE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR YOUR PROGRAM. THIS SPECIAL OLYMPICS GUIDANCE IS FOR USE IN ADDITION TO & NOT IN LIEU OF LOCAL REGULATIONS.

Special Olympics is updating its COVID-19 guidance based on the latest information from the World Health Organization (WHO), the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other health authorities. This guidance may reflect a greater degree of caution due to the increased potential of harmful health outcomes of COVID-19 for people with intellectual disabilities (ID), and to protect all participants and stakeholders in our movement.

Special Olympics strongly recommends and encourages all participants to be fully COVID-19 vaccinated and UpToDate with COVID-19 vaccine boosters.

Local, state/provincial/territorial, or national or tribal health and safety laws, rules, and regulations should serve as a primary guide for ensuring a safe environment for all participants at your Special Olympics trainings, competitions, and other activities. This Special Olympics guidance is for use in **addition to – not in lieu of** – any local, state/provincial/territorial, or national or tribal health and safety laws, rules. This updated guidance is at your disposal as you continue to safeguard and protect your participants.

This COVID-19 guidance is for use for training sessions or single-day events. For additional guidance for multi-day events/games or overnight activities, please email COVID@specialolympics.org a minimum of two (2) months in advance of the event and an initial response will be provided within five (5) working days. School-hosted activities, fundraising, and or non-Special Olympics/third-party hosted events are considered separate from this framework and Programs should follow regulations and COVID-19 protocols from their school and local authorities, respectively for those events.

SOI encourages Programs to designate a COVID-19 response point person to keep current on guidance, compliance requirements, to coordinate response, and to monitor positive cases and consult with their legal and/or insurance counsel regarding any liability or coverage related questions.

Guiding Principles

1. The health and safety of all members of the Special Olympics movement is paramount.
2. Beyond a sports organization, Special Olympics is a movement for and by people with ID, and its guidance must be inclusive and directed at the unique needs and abilities of people with ID.
3. Relevant WHO and country-specific (e.g., United States CDC) guidelines should serve as minimum standards. In addition, consideration should be given to local and community authorities with the most conservative/cautious guidelines being prioritized.
4. This guidance is based on current information available at the time of publication and takes a phased approach that is dependent on local transmission rates and vaccination rates in addition to testing/monitoring/contact tracing/health system capacity.

Terminology and Disclaimer

“Participants” are defined as all athletes, Unified partners, coaches, officials, volunteers, family members, caregivers, staff, or others in attendance of an activity (e.g., spectators). This guidance is intended for all in-person single-day activities (e.g., sports events, competition, coaches training, Young Athletes (YA), Healthy Athletes (HA), Program-hosted Unified Champion Schools (UCS), Athlete Leadership, volunteer meetings/trainings, etc.).

This guidance is not intended or implied to be a substitute for professional medical or public health advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Special Olympics makes no representation and assumes no responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of this advice from medical professionals and/or public health officials should be sought if you have specific questions related to COVID-19. A sample framework for how to approach local transmission rate increases, using participant vaccination rates as a mitigating factor is contained on page six (6).

LOW RISK	MODERATE RISK	SIGNIFICANT RISK	HIGH RISK
Local regulations for event size + additional SO precautions (See green guidance)	Local regulations for event size + additional SO precautions (See yellow guidance)	Local Regulations (outdoor) + Restriction on size of event (indoor venue) depending on the nature of the activity being undertaken, the venue size and venue ventilation and substantial SO precautions apply. (See orange guidance)	Virtual activities <u>only</u> for groups of >10 participants. Groups ≤10 can gather with substantial SO precautions in all areas

Mitigation Considerations	Low Risk	Moderate Risk	Significant Risk
Antigen /Home antigen testing	Not required	Not required	Home antigen testing recommended
Event Size and Venue	Per local authority regulations	Per local authority regulations	Outdoors: Size per local authority regulations. Indoors or Mixed Indoors/Outdoors: Adhere to local authority regulations
Type of sport/activity	Per local authority regulations	Per local authority regulations. Stagger start times to reduced crowding at the event.	Individual sports and indirect contact sports only for competition. For non-sport (e.g., leadership trainings, meetings, etc.): distancing and no direct contact.

<p>Forms</p>	<p>U.S. Only: Athletes, Coaches, Unified partners, Officials, Volunteers (excluding fundraising and school-based activities) complete Communicable Disease Waiver</p> <p>All Programs: Code of Conduct and Risk Form optional</p>	<p>U.S. Only: Athletes, Coaches, Unified partners, Officials, Volunteers (excluding fundraising and school-based activities) complete Communicable Disease Waiver</p> <p>All Programs: Code of Conduct and Risk Form optional</p>	<p>U.S. Only: Athletes, Coaches, Unified partners, Officials, Volunteers (excluding fundraising and school-based activities) complete Communicable Disease Waiver</p> <p>All Programs: Code of Conduct and Risk Form optional</p>
<p>Operations</p>	<p>Event organizers have a COVID-19 Point of Contact identified.</p> <p>Event organizers have a plan for identifying and isolating individuals with COVID-19 symptoms, notifying health authorities, per local requirements.</p>	<p>Event organizers have a COVID-19 Point of Contact identified.</p> <p>Event organizers have a plan for identifying and isolating individuals with COVID-19 symptoms, rapid testing (if necessary), per local requirements.</p>	<p>Event organizers have a COVID-19 Point of Contact identified.</p> <p>Event organizers have a plan for identifying and isolating individuals with COVID-19 symptoms, can facilitate rapid testing (if necessary), and notifying health authorities, per local requirements.</p>
<p>Onsite Screening</p> <p><i>Recommended for all events: Signage on preventive measures (e.g., handwashing, distancing, and masking) and education on symptoms and reminder to stay home if sick or any symptoms Positive COVID-19 test or previous COVID-19 disease</i></p>	<p>No onsite screening required.</p> <p>For advice on isolation requirements visit www.who.org or www.cdc.gov</p>	<p>No onsite screening required.</p> <p>For advice on isolation requirements visit www.who.org or www.cdc.gov</p>	<p>Verbal confirmation of no symptoms for all participants.</p> <p>For advice on isolation requirements visit www.who.org or www.cdc.gov</p>
<p>Masking</p>	<p>Masks recommended in crowded spaces and / or where two meters distance cannot be maintained.</p> <p>Not required while actively participating in sport/fitness.</p>	<p>Masks recommended in crowded spaces and / or where two meters distance cannot be maintained.</p> <p>Not required while actively participating in sport/fitness.</p>	<p>Masks strongly encouraged for ALL participants.</p> <p>Not required while actively participating in sport/fitness.</p>

Transportation	Masking not required. Optional if individuals wish to wear mask and/or required by local authorities.	Masking recommended for on any SO-provided transportation, unless all participants are vaccinated and/or if required by local authorities.	Private transportation encouraged as much as possible.
Sanitization	Sanitization protocol for all communal/shared areas (e.g., bathrooms, meal areas) and frequently touched surfaces (including shared equipment between uses).	Sanitization protocol for all communal/shared areas (e.g., bathrooms, meal areas) and frequently touched surfaces (including shared equipment between uses).	Sanitization protocol for all communal/shared areas (e.g., bathrooms, meal areas) and frequently touched surfaces (including shared equipment between uses).
Spectators (e.g., family/support staff)	Permitted per local authority regulations.	Permitted per local authority regulations. Separation from participants as much as possible.	Limited. Separate from participants, in spectator only areas.
Meals	No restrictions	Stagger mealtimes and/or dining groups as much as possible and individuals recommended to bring their own water bottles.	Participants bring their own meals and water bottles and/or provide pre-packaged/individually packaged pick-up food and beverage only. Stagger mealtimes and dining groups.
Non-Sport Gatherings (During competitions)	Follow size restrictions, venue options and risk mitigation guidance per above.	Minimize large social gatherings (e.g., community dances, athlete festivals), where possible.	No large social gatherings (e.g., community dances, athlete festivals). If smaller gatherings are held, follow size restrictions, venue options and risk mitigation guidance per above.

<p>Ceremonies</p>	<p>Follow size restrictions, venue options and risk mitigation guidance per above.</p>	<p>Follow size restrictions, venue options and risk mitigation guidance per above.</p>	<p>No in-person opening/closing ceremonies.</p> <p>For award ceremonies, maintain size limits, masking, sanitization, and distancing requirements outlined above. Find alternatives to placing medals around the athletes’ necks to maintain distancing.</p>
<p>Healthy Athletes (HA)</p>	<p>Follow size restrictions, venue options and risk mitigation guidance per above. See additional HA guidance for discipline-specific precautions.</p>	<p>Follow size restrictions, venue options and risk mitigation guidance per above. See additional HA guidance for discipline-specific precautions.</p>	<p>Follow size restrictions, venue options and risk mitigation guidance per above. See additional HA guidance for discipline-specific precautions</p>
<p>Young Athletes (YA)</p>	<p>Children encouraged to wear masks during YA activities as some children may not be able to access a COVID-19 vaccine.</p> <p>Unvaccinated coaches and volunteers encouraged to wear masks.</p> <p>Distancing and outdoor activities highly encouraged. Additional guidance for implementing YA activities in the Return to Activities protocol for young children.</p>	<p>Children should wear masks during YA activities as some children may not be able to access a COVID-19 vaccine</p> <p>All coaches and volunteers encouraged to wear masks.</p> <p>Distancing and outdoor activities highly encouraged. Additional guidance for implementing YA activities in the Return to Activities protocol for young children.</p>	<p>Children should wear masks during YA activities as some children may not be able to access a COVID-19 vaccine.</p> <p>All coaches and volunteers should wear masks. Distancing and outdoor activities required.</p> <p>Additional guidance for implementing YA activities in the Return to Activities protocol for young children.</p>

NOTE: *In all levels, and under “Stay at Home” Orders, virtual activities should be offered to those individuals who may be unable to attend in-person. For all participants who are unable to comply with this guidance, the individual’s circumstances should be assessed, and alternative accommodations should be offered.*

Sample framework

How to approach local transmission rate increases, using participant vaccination rates as a mitigating factor:

		Community Transmission (average daily new cases per 100,000 people)			
		0 – 10	11 – 50	51 – 99	≥100
Vaccination Rate (% of participants at event)	100%				
	80 – 99%				
	50 – 79 %				
	≤50%				

*Resources for Identifying 7-Day Rolling Average Case Rate: Country Level Data Globally (this is per Million to divide by 10): <https://tinyurl.com/944jd6xe>.

State Level Data for the U.S.: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/national/coronavirus-us-cases-deaths/>
County/District Level Data should also be available from your Local Health Authorities and/or Local Resources.

Onsite Screening Protocol for COVID-19

Information provided to all participants reminding them to stay at home if they have a fever or any signs and symptoms (cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea). Individuals must not participate in any activities if they are sick, for their own health and to reduce transmission of any infections to others. Instruct anyone who is ill to contact their own health provider for further evaluation.

However, in addition to this education, before or prior to entering an activity, practice, event, or gathering, for **Green** level, we strongly encourage having signage that reminds individuals who are sick or experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 to not enter the venue or participate in the event. For **Orange** level events (Moderate and Significant Risk):

1. If “yes” is indicated to any questions regarding symptoms and/or elevated temperature, participants **MUST** be isolated from the group (at minimum, kept 2m/6ft apart from others and with mask on), be sent home, and instructed to contact their healthcare provider for evaluation.
2. Participants found to have COVID-19 symptoms must abide by the isolation requirement of the [CDC isolation guidelines](#) and or the [WHO COVID -19 guidance](#). Participants (athletes and Unified partners) who test positive for/have COVID-19 must provide written medical clearance before returning to sport and fitness activities.

Questions

For local participants, please contact your Accredited Program office with questions. **For Accredited Programs**, please contact your Regional Office or Special Olympics, Inc. at COVID@specialolympics.org with questions.

For general questions to SOI, Regions may email COVID@specialolympics.org. For liability questions, email Legal@specialolympics.org.

Glossary of Terms

Fully vaccinated: This status applies to an individual when they have received all recommended doses in their primary COVID-19 vaccine series (the second dose in a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine primary series or one dose of a single-dose COVID-19 vaccine primary series). COVID-19 boosters of the vaccines are strongly recommended as immunity reduces over time and by accessing your booster when offer you will keep your protection against COVID-19 at its optimum level.

Participants: Athletes, Unified partners, coaches, officials, volunteers, family members, caregivers, staff, or others in attendance of an activity (e.g., spectators).

Community: Ideally, the community would be at the county/district level. If data is not available at the county/district level, then use the lowest level (e.g., state, provincial, national) for which the data is available.

Rolling 7-day average/100,000: A seven-day moving average, takes the case rates per 100,000 people for the last seven days, adds them up, and divides it by seven. This provides a more stable case rate than a daily rate, which may have very high days and very low days.

Additional Materials

Additional resources are available are located on [Special Olympics Resources website for COVID-19](#)