

Special Olympics: Return to Activity

Implementation

March 2021

Special Olympics



Introduction

Special Olympics



Introduction



Special Olympics Return To Activities Protocol

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As citizens, communities, and nations around the world resume operations and activities in the time of COVID-19, Special Olympics has developed guidance for its Programs on returning to activities. This guidance is founded on the latest medical information available and guidance from organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and nation-specific health agencies such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the U.S.

Throughout this document "participants" are defined as all athletes, unified partners, coaches, volunteers, family members, caregivers, staff or others in attendance of an activity.

Guidance on COVID-19 Return to Activities

Information on COVID-19 is changing daily. Transmission rates vary across the countries in which Special Olympics Programs operate. Local and national governments, school districts, and health agencies are developing their own guidance and mandates. It will be incumbent upon leaders at all levels of the Special Olympics movement to continually monitor this ever-changing situation and adjust decision-making accordingly while adhering to the guidance contained herein. Programs MUST designate a COVID-19 response point-person to keep current with Phases and all compliance requirements, coordinate response and monitor for COVID-19. This may be the National Director/CEO/Executive Director or a designee.

These are intended as minimum guidelines for Special Olympics Programs as they consider returning to activities. It is intended to supplement – not replace – any state/provincial, local, territorial/national or tribal health and safety laws, rules and regulations with which similar organizations must comply.

Additionally, the information in this document is not intended or implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. The knowledge and circumstances around COVID-19 are changing constantly and, as such, Special Olympics makes no representation and assumes no responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of this information. Further, you should seek advice from medical professionals and/or public health officials if you have specific questions about symptoms and/or diagnoses related to COVID-19.

Similarly, Programs should immediately consult with 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 intellectual disabilities (ID) (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., U.S. CDC) guidelines should serve as minimum standards. In addition, consideration should be given to local and community authorities in that if there are more conservative/restrictive guidelines, these should be followed.
4. Guidance is based on current medical information available at the time of publication. As knowledge of COVID-19 is changing rapidly, guidance will continue to evolve.
5. Guidance takes a phased approach that is dependent on local transmission rates, and testing/monitoring/contact tracing/health system capacity.

Special Olympics Return to Activities Protocol ([Click Here](#))

Phased Approach to Return to Activities

Special Olympics is adopting a three (3) phased approach to return to activities. It is important to note there may be times a community will revert to an earlier phase if and when the spread of infection rises in the future.

Participation Risk Awareness and Acknowledgement

Prior to returning to any in-person Special Olympics activities in Phases 1 through 2, all participants are recommended to complete and return a Participant Risk Acknowledgement Form which provides information and guidance on assessing risk and acknowledges that participation could increase risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19.

If participants have tested positive and/or been diagnosed with COVID-19, the participant must provide written proof of clearance from their healthcare professional prior to returning to sport or fitness activities. Special Olympics Programs should ensure that all participants (e.g. athletes, unified partners, coaches, volunteers, staff, and families) are educated about those that are at higher risk of complications from COVID-19 as well as all procedures and expectations for return to activities.

Special Olympics Return To Activities Phases			
Phase 0	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Prevalence: community transmission occurring Stay at home order in place for all individuals.	Prevalence: clusters of cases occurring Stay at home order is lifted, restriction on size of gatherings (<10 people).	Prevalence: sporadic cases reported Size restrictions on gatherings increased to <50 people.	Prevalence: No reported cases* No restrictions on size of gatherings and public facilities are open.
No events or activities of any sort to be held in person.	HIGH RISK INDIVIDUALS (see appendix) should continue to remain at home.	HIGH RISK INDIVIDUALS (see appendix) should continue to remain at home.	HIGH RISK INDIVIDUALS (see appendix) can resume public interactions, but should practice physical distancing, minimizing exposure to social settings where distancing may not be practical, unless precautionary measures are observed.
Individual sport training sessions in own home using own equipment.	PRACTICES, HEALTH/FITNESS, LEADERSHIP, FUNDRAISING and LOCAL EVENTS (with less than 10 participants) MAY resume if they adhere to strict physical distancing and sanitation protocols. No direct or indirect contact (e.g. through a ball in the hand) should take place.	PRACTICES, HEALTH/FITNESS, LEADERSHIP, FUNDRAISING and LOCAL EVENTS (with less than 50 participants), MAY resume if they adhere to physical distancing and sanitation protocols. Indirect contact (e.g. through a ball in the hand) MAY resume. No direct contact should occur in sports.	LARGE COMPETITION and GAMES (with people traveling from multiple geographic areas who are in same phase) MAY potentially occur, if permitted by WHO, country and local standards.
Coaching occurs virtually.	Virtual programming should be made available for those not able to attend in person.	Virtual programming should be made available for those not able to attend in person.	Virtual programming should still be made available for those not able to attend in person.
Fitness and Health programming offered virtually or at home.	HEALTHY ATHLETES should NOT occur at events.	HEALTHY ATHLETES may occur for disciplines where risk mitigation and infection control precautions can be put in place. Health programming also offered virtually or at home.	HEALTHY ATHLETES may resume activities, with appropriate infection control precautions in place.
Meetings, conferences or trainings to be held virtually.	SCHOOL-based activities led by schools should comply with guidance from schools/districts.	SCHOOL-based activities led by schools should comply with guidance from schools/districts.	SCHOOL-based activities led by schools should comply with guidance from schools/districts.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS RETURN TO ACTIVITIES PHASES



Phase 0	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
<p>Prevalence: community transmission occurring Stay at home order in place for all individuals.</p>	<p>Prevalence: clusters of cases occurring Stay at home order is lifted, restriction on size of gatherings (≤10 people).</p>	<p>Prevalence: sporadic cases reported) Size restrictions on gatherings increased to ≤50 people.</p>	<p>Prevalence: No reported cases*) No restrictions on size of gatherings and public facilities are open. <i>* In Epidemic or Pandemic stage</i></p>
<p>No events or activities of any sort to be held in person.</p> <p>Individual sport training sessions in own home using own equipment.</p> <p>Coaching occurs virtually.</p> <p>Fitness and Health programming offered virtually or at home.</p> <p>Meetings, conferences or trainings to be held virtually.</p>	<p>HIGH RISK INDIVIDUALS (see appendix) should continue to remain at home.</p> <p>PRACTICES, HEALTH/FITNESS, LEADERSHIP and LOCAL EVENTS (10 or fewer participants) MAY resume if they adhere to strict physical distancing and sanitation protocols. No direct or indirect contact (e.g. through a ball in the hand) should take place.</p> <p>Virtual programming should be made available for those not able to attend in person.</p> <p>Select disciplines of HEALTHY ATHLETES occur for disciplines where risk mitigation and infection control precautions can be put in place.</p> <p>SCHOOL-based activities led by schools should comply with guidance from schools/districts.</p>	<p>HIGH RISK INDIVIDUALS (see appendix) should continue to remain at home.</p> <p>PRACTICES, HEALTH/FITNESS, LEADERSHIP and LOCAL EVENTS (50 or fewer participants), MAY resume if they adhere to physical distancing and sanitation protocols. Indirect contact (e.g. through a ball in the hand) MAY resume. No direct contact should occur in sports.</p> <p>Virtual programming should be made available for those not able to attend in person.</p> <p>HEALTHY ATHLETES may occur for disciplines where risk mitigation and infection control precautions can be put in place.</p> <p>SCHOOL-based activities led by schools should comply with guidance from schools/districts.</p>	<p>HIGH RISK INDIVIDUALS (see appendix) can resume public interactions, but should practice physical distancing, minimizing exposure to social settings where distancing may not be practical, unless precautionary measures are observed.</p> <p>LARGE COMPETITION and GAMES (with people traveling from multiple geographic areas who are in same phase) MAY potentially occur, if permitted by WHO, country and local standards.</p> <p>Virtual programming should still be made available for those not able to attend in person.</p> <p>HEALTHY ATHLETES may resume activities, with appropriate infection control precautions in place.</p> <p>SCHOOL-based activities led by schools should comply with guidance from schools/districts.</p>

PHASE 0 – All Individuals Stay at Home



Share resources digitally and activate participants virtually (or via mailings).

Virtual participants **with COVID-19 symptoms** should refrain from participating in activities and consult with a healthcare professional for further evaluation.

Know how to communicate potential cases to the local health authorities for testing and to SOI.

PHASE 1: Local gatherings restricted to <10 people, individuals at high risk should remain safe at home



- Screening
- Continue to offer virtual or at home training opportunities
- Distancing guidelines
- Groups should stay together and not change.
- Standard infection prevention measures
- No spectators
- List of participants

PHASE 1: Basketball and Soccer



- All participants should maintain social distancing
- Focus on skill based individual practice to improve shooting, passing, dribbling, etc.
- Masks should be worn at all times except for when in play
- **NO SCRIMMAGING OR TEAM PLAY**

PHASE 1: Athletics, Cycling & Tennis



- All participants must maintain social distancing
- Equipment used by multiple Athletes should be sanitized between use
 - EX: Mini Jav thrown by 1 Athlete should be sanitized before use by another Athlete.
- All participants must wear mask at all times unless in play, running, cycling, etc.

PHASE 2: Local gatherings restricted to <50 people, individuals at high risk should remain safe at home



- Screening
- Distancing guidelines
- Groups should stay together and not change.
- Standard infection prevention measures
- No spectators
- Disinfect shared equipment
- List of participants

PHASE 3: No restrictions on size of gatherings and public facilities are open



- Activity continues as normal
- No onsite screening required
- Proper hygiene practices are encouraged

Preparing the Venue

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Preparing the Venue



Ensure that the venue is disinfected or sanitized

Post signage about PPE, hygiene, and physical distancing

Have hand sanitizer or handwashing facilities

Set-up single entry, with screening, and single exit areas

Preparing the Venue



At this time *Only outdoor facilities will be approved for SOTX practices.*

COVID safety protocols will be enforced by the coaches:

- Masks will be worn
- Social distancing will be maintained
- Hand sanitizer will be available and used during practice
- Temperature will be taken before the start of practice
- Roster will be maintained by the coach of all participants present
 - Roster can be found on [SOTX.org](https://www.sotx.org)

Travel to Activity

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Traveling to the venue



Facemasks should be worn when a participant is:

- ▶ Taking public transportation
- ▶ Using Special Olympics provided transportation
- ▶ Carpooling with someone not living with them

Onsite Screening

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Onsite Screening (required for Phases 1 & 2)



Step 1: Prepare your screening area

- ▶ Create a single point of entry
- ▶ Maintains physical distance (6ft/2m) during screening
- ▶ Ensure you have the proper supplies
 - ▶ Thermometer
 - ▶ Sanitizer
 - ▶ Hand sanitizer
 - ▶ Equipment sanitizer
 - ▶ Trash bags as needed
 - ▶ Mask(s)
 - ▶ Determine if coach will provide masks or if athletes will be responsible for their own masks

Onsite Screening (required for Phases 1 & 2)



Step 2: Screening Questions

- ▶ In the last 14 days, have you had contact with someone who has been sick with COVID-19?
- ▶ Have you had a fever in the last week?
- ▶ Do you have a cough and/or difficulty breathing?
- ▶ Do you have any other signs or symptoms of COVID-19?

Onsite Screening (required for Phases 1 & 2)



Step 3: Temperature Measurement

- ▶ non-touch thermal scanning thermometer

Onsite Screening (required for Phases 1 & 2)



Step 4: Record

- ▶ If yes to any questions, participants **MUST** be isolated from the group, be sent home, and instructed to contact their healthcare provider
- ▶ Participants who are found to have COVID-19 symptoms must wait 7 days after symptoms resolve to return to activity OR must provide written proof of physician clearance to Special Olympics to return earlier.
- ▶ Participants who test positive for/have COVID-19 must provide written medical clearance before returning to sport and fitness activities.

Coaching Adjustments

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Coaching Adjustments



Maintain physical distancing

Ensure no shared supplies

Wiping down all shared equipment frequently

Provide constant reminders about hygiene, standard infection prevention, physical distancing, and PPE

Avoid activities that require close contact

Ensure participants are wearing facemasks

Questions?

All resources can be found at [SOTX.org/training](https://www.sotx.org/training)

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