

COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

Special Olympics Wisconsin asks that all authorized users of the Special Olympics logo and name review and become acquainted with the following: Special Olympics Language Guidelines, Special Olympics Wisconsin Public Relations Standards and the SOWI Crisis Communications Plan. Please adhere to the following policies.

If there are any questions, contact:

Kelly Klopping
Vice President of Communications
(800) 552-1324 or (608) 442-5662
kklopping@specialolympicswisconsin.org

OFFICIAL SPECIAL OLYMPICS MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Special Olympics is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with cognitive disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in the sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

OFFICIAL SPECIAL OLYMPICS ATHLETE OATH

Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt.

REGISTERED TRADEMARK POLICIES

The Special Olympics logo is the official trademark of the worldwide Special Olympics program. The logo is registered with the U.S. Patent Office and in many other countries around the world. Use of this logo may only be granted by Special Olympics Inc. Headquarters, or its duly authorized agents. State and National programs accredited by Special Olympics Inc. Headquarters are considered authorized agents to authorize logo use within the geographic boundaries of their programs. Other Special Olympics programs should have logo designs and uses approved by their Program or National Director.

The logo must be reproduced in its official form, enlarged or reduced. It may not be distorted in any way. The trademark symbol ® must appear in a legible size, and in its proper position as shown in logo examples. This is to protect the logo's trademark registration and to prevent individuals and organizations from using it without the express permission of the Special Olympics organization.

OFFICIAL SPECIAL OLYMPICS WISCONSIN CREDIT LINE

The credit line must appear on all printed or written information about Special Olympics. This information is considered "official communication" and includes materials used for fund raising and special events, or on brochures and newsletters.

The credit line:

*Created by the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation.
Authorized and Accredited by Special Olympics, Inc.,
for the Benefit of Persons with Cognitive Disabilities.*

The Official Special Olympics Logo



Official SOI Colors:

← SOI Teal

← SOI Red

← SOI Teal

Pantone® Colors:

Use Pantone 327C

Use Pantone 485C

Use Pantone 327C

The official Special Olympics logo above can only be reproduced in the colors listed, or in solid red, solid teal, solid black or solid white. The logo symbolizes the joy and freedom of sports and fitness, with a representation of Special Olympics' global outreach. *★If you are designing uniforms, banners, marketing materials, etc., you can obtain an electronic version of the logo from SpecialOlympicsWisconsin.org, by calling the Program office at (800)552-1324 or by emailing kkloeping@specialolympicswisconsin.org.*

The official logo should be used on all Special Olympics materials. These include banners, flyers, athlete uniforms, newsletters, invitations, stationary, certificates, yearbooks and other program materials.

The Special Olympics logo is the official trademark of the worldwide Special Olympics movement and is registered with the U.S. Patent Office. Permission for use of this logo is granted to local Agencies only by SOWI within the geographical boundaries of Wisconsin. The statement the logo makes depends heavily upon the quality of its appearance and the quality of the applications on which it appears. Use careful discretion when applying the logo to protect the integrity of this world-class athletic program.

In order to comply with SOI's guidelines below and to ensure risk management, all Polar Plunge events must be organized through the Special Olympics Regional offices. No Special Olympics Agency can organize a Polar Plunge event, but can participate in the Regional Plunges to raise money for your Agency.

As the owner of the Special Olympics Marks, Special Olympics, Inc. (SOI) is responsible for registering, protecting and enforcing all of SOI's ownership and related rights to the use of the Special Olympics Marks and the goodwill and value associated with them. SOI is therefore exclusively responsible for registering or recording all trademarks, service marks, copyrights, and all other recordable interests in any intellectual property comprising the Special Olympics Marks with the appropriate legal or governmental entities throughout the world, and for filing and prosecuting all actions against third parties for misappropriation, infringement or other misuse of the Special Olympics Marks or other intellectual property associated with Special Olympics.

Should SOI ever be challenged by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office to show that it has properly protected SOI's Marks it would be necessary to illustrate that the specific Mark was used consistently.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS WISCONSIN PHOTOGRAPH RELEASE STATEMENT

No person with a cognitive disability may compete in any Special Olympics Wisconsin event without having a signed parent/guardian release statement on file (which is part of the athlete registration process to participate in SOWI). The statement grants permission for SOWI and the media to use the athlete's name, likeness, voice and words in television, radio, films, newspapers, magazines and other media for the purpose of promoting and publicizing, educating the public about, and raising funds for Special Olympics.

Pictures are worth a thousand words, and photos of our athletes and volunteers truly tell the story of Special Olympics Wisconsin.

LANGUAGE GUIDELINES

Words can open doors to enable persons with disabilities to lead fuller, more independent lives. Words can also create barriers or stereotypes that are not only demeaning to persons with disabilities, but rob them of their individuality. The following language guidelines have been developed by experts in cognitive disabilities for use by anyone writing or speaking about persons with disabilities to ensure that all people are portrayed with individuality and dignity.

Appropriate Terminology

- A person **has cognitive disabilities**, rather than is suffering from, afflicted with, or a victim of mental retardation.
- Do not use the adjective **unfortunate** when talking about persons with disabilities. Disabling conditions do not have to be life-defining in a negative way.
- It should be said that our athletes are individuals, persons, or people **with** cognitive disabilities, NOT cognitively disabled people.
- A person **uses a wheelchair** rather than is confined or restricted to a wheelchair.
- Distinguish between adults and children with cognitive disabilities. Use **adults** or **children** or **older** or **younger athletes**. Do not use the label **kids** when referring to Special Olympics athletes. Adult athletes are an integral part of the program.
- **“Down syndrome”** has replaced “Down’s syndrome” and “Mongoloid.”
- Refer to participants in Special Olympics as **athletes**. In *no case* should the word appear in quotation marks.
- A person is **disabled** rather than crippled.
- Do not use the word **“the”** in front of Special Olympics unless describing a specific Special Olympics event or official.
- Do not **sensationalize the accomplishments of persons with disabilities**. While these accomplishments should be recognized and applauded, people in the disability rights movement have tried to make the public aware of the negative impact on referring to the achievements of physically or mentally challenged people with excessive hyperbole.
- Do not use the word **special** when talking about persons with cognitive disabilities. The term is distancing an inappropriate and describes that which is different about any person.
- Use the words **“Special Olympics Incorporated”** when referring to the worldwide Special Olympics Program.

Please note: *Special Olympics Inc. uses the terminology intellectual disability. Special Olympics Wisconsin prefers cognitive disabilities. Both are correct.*

SPECIAL OLYMPICS FACTS & “CATCH” PHRASES

These facts are great for use in media interviews . . .

- Special Olympics Wisconsin is the largest volunteer-driven, athletic organization in the state, involving nearly 10,000 athletes with cognitive disabilities.
- SOWI offers 18 different sports. Aquatics, Athletics, Basketball, Bocce, Bowling, Cross Country Skiing, Cycling, Down Hill Skiing, Flag football, Golf, Gymnastics, Powerlifting, Snowshoe Racing, Soccer, Softball, Tennis, Turbo Javelin and Volleyball
- SOWI holds five state competitions: Winter Games, Indoor Sports Tournament, Summer Games, Outdoor Sports Tournament, and Fall Sports Tournament and hosts three statewide special events, The Law Enforcement Torch Run®, the Polar Plunge®, and the World’s Largest Truck Convoy®, with the Over the Edge events increasing in locations around the state.
- Funding for SOWI is provided by individuals, organizations and foundations and businesses
- Special Olympics is the largest program of athletic training and competition for persons with cognitive disabilities in the world.
- Special Olympics is truly a statewide organization with local teams in almost all 72 counties, serving nearly 10,000 athletes and using more than 10,000 volunteers to make our competitions possible.
- In Special Olympics, we like to say that winning doesn’t happen at the finish line, it happens in the heart.
- In Special Olympics, we don’t break records . . . we break barriers.
- Special Olympics goes on night and day in over 170 countries throughout the world.
- “Special Olympics is sports in its truest sense. The goal is not to win, but to try. No records are broken in Special Olympics except those of courage, determination and sportsmanship.” *Eunice Kennedy Shriver*
- We help persons with disabilities reach their potential by focusing on their abilities . . . not their disabilities.
- Special Olympics is the only organization with full sanction by the International Olympic Committee to use the name “Olympics.”

WHAT IS PUBLIC RELATIONS?

Public Relations (PR) is not just working with the media to get in the paper and on television. It is a combination of many methods, which include: media relations, advertising, public speaking, promotions, marketing, working with sponsors, internal communications, community relations, educational relations, merchandising, development/fund raising, special events and more!

Public Relations Can Help You . . .

- communicate specific information with a specific target group.
- recruit athletes, families, volunteers and coaches.
- drive fund raising campaigns, silent auctions and special events.
- educate the public about the abilities of people with cognitive disabilities.
- change public opinion and behavior.
- motivate participants – athletes, families, volunteers, etc.
- promote games and events and generate community support.

HOW TO WRITE A PRESS RELEASE

Press releases should be used to send current announcements of Games, special events, etc. to the media. You may also use a press release to find new volunteers or publicize newsworthy accomplishments of athletes, coaches or volunteers. The ultimate goal of a press release is to spark enough interest in the media to get them to publicize it.

The Lead

The first, or “lead,” paragraph is the most important part of the release, as it should contain the basic facts of the story. It should capture the attention of the reader and make them want to read on. It should also be able to stand alone, should the rest of the story be cut. Try to answer questions, “WHO?, WHAT?, WHERE?, WHEN? and WHY?” in the lead paragraph of your press release.

Content – MAKE SURE THE RELEASE IS LOCALIZED!

- Who, What, Where, When, Why & How?
- Check for grammar and spelling.
- Avoid long paragraphs and run-on sentences.
- Spell out any acronyms or abbreviations.
- Avoid including opinions – just the facts.
- Check the facts carefully.

Format

- Try to keep the release one page in length.
- Use stationary with the Official Logo on the top.
- Include contact person, organization, phone number and release date.
- Use a brief, eye-catching headline.
- To signal continuation on a second page, type “-MORE-“ at the bottom of page one.
- At the end of the release, type “###”.

Other Tips for Press Releases

- Email all releases to media and use photos if appropriate.
- Send photos whenever possible and include its caption at the bottom of the news release. (Label back of photo with your address to have it sent back and avoid being lost.)
- Use statistics to help illustrate your point (. . . the event raised over \$\$\$).
- Point out notable accomplishments of athletes, sponsors, coaches, volunteers, etc.
- For events, be sure to call the media as a follow-up to the releases and invite them, even in a voicemail.
- Email the release a week or two before the event, followed by a phone call or a second email a couple of days before the event.
- Proofread! Proofread! Proofread!



Special Olympics
Wisconsin
Be a fan™

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
(date here)

CONTACT: (Your name)
(Your number)

Local Special Olympics Agency Puts Out Volunteer Call

(Your home town here)'s (Agency name here) Special Olympics Agency is currently seeking volunteers for (list your needs). Whether you have a day or two per year, a day or two each month, or even a few hours a week, volunteers each play an integral role in the success of our local athletes training and competing!

(List your needs here including the volunteer position and approximately how many hours per week, month or year it takes such as:

- **Basketball coach needed to hold one practice each week for eight weeks.**
- **Fundraising member needed on Agency Management Team to hold fundraisers, such as a bake sale or a raffle, to raise funds for new athlete uniforms.**
- **Member on Agency Management Team needed to coordinate monthly newsletter for Special Olympics Agency.)**

Thank you to (mention local sponsors here). Special Olympics (your agency name) holds (# of competitions) competitions per year, providing year-round training and competition opportunities through (# of sports) different Olympic-type sports for (# of athletes) individuals with cognitive disabilities. For more information, visit SpecialOlympicsWisconsin.org or call (800) 552-1324.

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For more information on your local Special Olympics Agency or athletes, contact (your name) at (your number).

FUND RAISER/EVENT SAMPLE NEWS RELEASE



Special Olympics
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
(date here)

CONTACT: (Your name)
(Your number)

Local Special Olympics Agency Holds (*Type of?*) Fundraiser

(Your home town here)'s *(Agency name here)* Special Olympics Agency is holding *(name of fundraiser)* in order to raise money for *(athlete uniforms? Games transportation costs? Sports Equipment?)*.

(Explain details of fundraiser: location, time, costs of product your selling, local celebrities taking part, etc.)

Thank you to *(mention local sponsors or those who helped with fundraiser)*. Special Olympics *(your agency name)* holds *(# of competitions)* competitions per year, providing year-round training and competition opportunities through *(# of sports)* different Olympic-type sports for *(# of athletes)* individuals with cognitive disabilities. For more information, visit SpecialOlympicsWisconsin.org or call (800) 552-1324.

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For more information or to interview your local Special Olympics Agency or athletes, contact *(your name)* at *(your number)*.



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Contact: (your name)
Email: (your email)
Phone: (your phone number)

Public Service Announcement:
Law Enforcement Torch Run 25th Anniversary Celebration at
2011 State Summer Games

Please run through June 9, 2011

45 Seconds

Join us as we celebrate 25 years of the Law Enforcement Torch Run at UW-Stevens Point Colman track for the 2011 Special Olympics Wisconsin State Summer Games Opening Ceremony at 6:30 pm on June 9th. Bring a chair to the track or come Friday June 10th to watch more than 1,700 athletes compete. Sign up to volunteer June 10-11 escorting athletes, presenting awards, or other tasks. Volunteers receive a free t-shirt! Be a fan as the athletes compete for state titles in track & field, swimming, power lifting and soccer. For more information or to volunteer, visit SpecialOlympicsWisconsin.org.

20 Seconds

Come celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Law Enforcement Torch Run at UW-Stevens Point Colman track for the 2011 Special Olympics Wisconsin State Summer Games, June 9-11. More than 1,700 athletes will compete in track & field, swimming, power lifting and soccer. Sign up to volunteer and receive a free t-shirt. Visit SpecialOlympicsWisconsin.org.

15 Seconds

Be a fan and join us in cheering on more than 1,700 athletes June 9-11 at UW-Stevens Point for the Special Olympics Wisconsin State Summer Games. Sign up to volunteer and receive a free t-shirt. Visit SpecialOlympicsWisconsin.org.

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AGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

It is required that Agencies regularly distribute information to athletes, families, volunteers, sponsors and the general public, as well as their Regional office.

Information can be distributed timely and efficiently in a newsletter, regular email updates by the Agency, or through social media.

Agency websites must adhere to the SOWI language and logo standards. If your agency has a website, please e-mail the link to your Regional Director of Development and the Visual Media Manager. Your website will be added to the list of agency resources online and to your Region's Web page.

Your communications could include:

- Important dates to remember . . . (competitions, medical deadlines, etc.)
- Upcoming events – fund raisers, competitions, etc. or a recap of a past event
- Contact names and numbers
- Any important paperwork needed from coaches or athletes for events
- A coach or athlete feature with just a little paragraph about that person and their accomplishments
- Inspiring quotes or fun jokes to spice up the mailing

There is no such thing as too much communication!

To insure that everyone involved with your Agency is up to speed with what is going on, over communicate! People lead busy lives and the more a date is reinforced, the more likely they will remember.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

SPECIAL OLYMPICS WISCONSIN SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

Purpose of Social Media

Thanks to social networking sites like Facebook, people bond with others by joining online communities not only for personal reasons, but also to promote organizations they care about. Video-sharing sites, like YouTube, and micro-blogs, like Twitter, have allowed people to promote themselves or their companies by sharing snippets of their lives and spreading news with the click of a button.

Social media allows Special Olympics Wisconsin employees and volunteers to speak in real-time, with a genuine voice. Unlike marketing brochures and billboards that are edited and drafted before publication, social media outlets demand unfiltered and immediate responses and are a way to build long-term relationships, rather than to just promote a campaign.

Using social media is a way you can listen, communicate and participate with your fanbase in a very personal and natural exchange. While many of the following social media guidelines may seem common sense, this is a guide to navigating the ever-changing social media landscape.

Special Olympics Social Presence

As of today, Special Olympics Wisconsin is active on the following websites.

Facebook: facebook.com/SpecialOlympicsWisconsin

Facebook is a powerful social network that combines newsfeeds from your friends and what they “like” across the internet. It can help you stay in touch with supporters, network with other organizations, gain advocates for the cause, drive fans to events, boost the visibility of your local website and share photos or videos.

Twitter: @sowisconsin or twitter.com/sowisconsin

Twitter is a microblogging service that allows you to share what is going on right now in 140 characters or less. Twitter can help you connect with athletes and supporters, see what people are saying about your program, share important content via photos, videos, or web links, and let everyone know about your next big competition or event.

YouTube: youtube.com/sowisconsin

YouTube is a video-sharing website on which users can upload, share and view videos.

LinkedIn: linkedin.com/groups?gid=1810617

LinkedIn is a business-related social networking site. It is used mainly for professional networking.

Guidelines for Starting Your Own Facebook Page

- Special Olympics Wisconsin Agency and Region Facebook pages and websites must be consistent with SOWI logo and language guidelines. For more information, visit http://www.specialolympicswisconsin.org/media_pub.html.
- There should be at least two Facebook admins for each Facebook page so there is a back-up.
- Facebook admins should monitor Facebook pages several times a week to answer any questions that have been posted or delete any spam that doesn't belong on the page.
- Agencies should inform the SOWI Visual Media Manager and the Regional Director of Development when an agency Facebook page is created so they can follow your page.
- Photos are a great way to share the success of your agency, but be cautious about posting photos to public web pages. Registered Special Olympics athletes and volunteers have signed photo release waivers, but it is possible that other people in your photos have not. It is best to consider the wishes of those in your photos before posting them to Facebook or tagging people in photos.
- Ask questions to start conversations with fans and create ways for your supporters to actively participate in content creation.
- Using the @ symbol, tag other organizations/followers in your status updates to help create a network of supporters.
- Remember you can post content from YouTube, online newspapers, blogs and more.
- The guidelines above may also pertain to other social networks such as Twitter, Linked In groups, etc.

Guidelines for Starting Your Own Twitter Account

- Share useful information, don't just broadcast. Include links to your site and others as relevant, re-tweet other tweets if it's pertinent to your organizations and don't be afraid to engage and ask followers questions.
- Update several times a day.
- Follow people who participate or support SOWI in your community.
- If you're mentioning another person/organization in your tweet, use the @ symbol to link directly to their profile.
- Using the link shortening site is a great way to save valuable character space. Try <http://j.mp/> for website links and <http://yfrog.com> for photos.
- If you're hosting a local event, create a hashtag where people can follow tweets from anyone at the event (a hashtag is a # followed by your topic with no spaces (i.e. #specialolympics)).
- Monitor what is being said about your program. Search for keywords on Twitter or use a tool like Tweet Deck to aggregate multiple keyword searches (this is also a great way to find content you want to re-tweet).

Top 10 Social Media Guidelines

1) When Speaking from Your Own Point of View, Identify Yourself:

Say what is on your mind, but be cautious that you are representing the organization. When you are a Facebook administrator and are posting on a Polar Plunge, Agency Facebook page or other SOWI page, remember that you are speaking directly on behalf of the organization as a single voice. Try to maintain a consistent voice, even when there are multiple page administrators.

2) Be Responsible:

Don't behave differently online than you would in any other public setting. Give a timely response to people when they ask you questions and monitor your responses and conversations.

With Social Media tools, you can share news in seconds and your followers can give feedback right away. Social Media requires administrators be constantly plugged into what's happening on their page so administrators should be people who are knowledgeable about the organization. In addition, with Social Media tools, you are the face of the organization to hundreds or thousands of people. With one click of a button, you could accidentally post something on the SOWI account instead of their personal account. For these reasons, those in charge of Social Media must be accountable for their actions.

3) Consider Your Audience:

Most of our followers are fans of Special Olympics and may be parents, athletes, coaches, teachers, volunteers, and staff. Consider what you are publishing and make sure it caters to the needs of these individuals without alienating anyone. Example: If tweeting at an event, consider what each one of these groups following from home or on their phone from the event would want to hear about.

4) Bring Value:

Consider posting frequency: Find the balance between keeping your audience updated and turning them off with too many posts. When deciding whether to post information, decide how much value this will bring to your constituents. Consider the journalistic five W's and H (Who, Why, When, Where, What, How). How does this impact the people you are communicating with and why do they care?

A Facebook page can be an easy way to share information and photos with Special Olympics Wisconsin volunteers, athletes and families.

5) Pick Your Battles and Accept Your Mistakes:

Don't pick fights, but be the first to correct your own mistakes, and don't alter previous posts without indicating that you have done so.

If a Facebook fan says something in poor taste, do not delete their message (unless it contains obscenities or is directly derogatory towards another person), but instead respond to them politely and honestly and try to answer the question or correct the facts.

6) Protect Confidential and Copyrighted Information:

The online community has the power to speak out and have their voices heard. Businesses and non-profit organizations must respond honestly, openly and transparently. However, this doesn't mean blaring out private information before it becomes public. If it's questionable, keep it quiet.

7) Be Respectful:

What happens online stays there... forever. Always take a moment to think of what you're saying as it could be interpreted by different parties. Consider how your words reflect the organization's mission and make sure you are being a good representative of Special Olympics.

8) Don't Cite or Reference Donors or Sponsors without their Approval:

Ask partners, sponsors, donors, etc. for approval first. When you do reference an organization, link back to their website.

9) Be Transparent:

If there is a crisis situation, state what information the organization has agreed to release. Follow the rules stated in the crisis communication plan. Do not release information before instructed to by the Vice President of Communications or the CEO.

10) Do Not Speculate: If you don't have all the facts, do not make them up. Check with a SOWI staff member who has knowledge about the subject before providing an answer or ask this staff member to follow up directly.

Conclusion

Social media is a dynamic, constantly changing organism and this document will need to continually be modified to keep information accurate. This document is intended to provide general advice for how Special Olympics Wisconsin can use social media to further the organization's goals and abide by social media etiquette. Social media is a marketing tool that needs to remain consistent with all Special Olympics messaging. When in doubt, consult the Visual Marketing Manager or the Vice President of Communications.

MATERIALS AVAILABLE FROM HEADQUARTERS OFFICE

- Headquarters Office Informational Brochure & Matching folder
- Regional Offices Informational Brochure
- SOWI Statewide Fact Sheet
- Region Fact Sheets
- Five State Games Fact Sheets
- SOWI Law Enforcement Torch Run Fact Sheet
- SOWI Polar Plunge Fact Sheet
- SOWI Over The Edge Fact Sheet
- SOWI World's Largest Truck Convoy Fact Sheet
- SOWI Young Athletes Program Fact Sheet
- SOWI Healthy Athletes Program Fact Sheet
- SOWI Camp Shriver Fact Sheet
- SOWI R-Word Campaign Brochure
- SOWI Families and Friends Handbook
- SOWI Prospective Agency Packet
- SOWI 2010 Financial Review
- SOWI Law Enforcement Torch Run Year-Round Brochure
- SOWI History Page
- SOWI Language Usage Guidelines
- Video/DVD library of many of the programs and topics listed above

CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

A crisis is an unexpected situation or incident posing potential or actual harm to Special Olympics' reputation and viability. Information about any incident that could have a negative impact on the image of Special Olympics Wisconsin, can lead to a crisis situation.

While it is not always possible to anticipate or prevent a crisis, this crisis communications information will be in place to assist at all levels of the organization. Special Olympics Wisconsin will have the opportunity to present its side of the story before an adverse opinion is formed or becomes well known. Advanced preparation takes some of the tension out of the air, and when dealing with the media, the more you can appear to be in control of the situation, non-excited, they are less likely to investigate on their own.

Crisis Team

Listed below are the names and telephone numbers (work and home) of key contacts and your Region key emergency/medial relief organizations. This checklist will be updated every six months.

	<u>Work Telephone</u>	<u>Cell Phone</u>
President	608-442-5660	608-695-3267
VP of Communications	608-442-5662	608-219-9582
VP of Program Services	608-442-5661	608-345-5269
Chief Operating Officer	608-442-5663	608-770-7902
For Torch Run Event: Contact LETR Director	608-442-5668	608-575-1221
General Emergency	9-1-1	
Local Police Department	_____	_____
Local Fire Department	_____	_____
Local Hospital	_____	_____
Insurance Emergency Claims Service	800-566-7941 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)	

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NOTIFICATION OF SPECIAL OLYMPICS WISCONSIN

1. In case of an emergency, determine whether proper authorities have been notified (e.g., police, fire department, rescue squad). The first priority is to prevent further injury and give necessary treatment to individuals who are injured.
 - a. Attend and assess any victims.
 - b. Request first aid assistance or call 9-1-1.
 - c. Administer CPR by a qualified person only, if it is appropriate.
 - d. Request staff/volunteers to maintain crowd control.
2. If necessary, take a count of athletes, coaches, volunteers, etc. to keep the group together, whether in a hotel or at an event.
3. In the event of a “crisis” at a State event, immediately contact in this order the Special Olympics Wisconsin President, the Vice President of Communications, the Vice President of Program Services or the Chief Operating Officer at their cell phone numbers. If it’s a Torch Run event, the LETR Director should be contacted if the President or Vice President of Communications are unreachable, though the manager will not serve as the media spokesperson, but rather allow the event’s regional liaison to work with their local media. For a regional event, the regional director should be contacted first, followed by the Program office contacts if the crisis has potential to make headlines in the media.

Note: VP of Communications will contact SOI’s Kirsten Suto and/or American Specialty if deemed necessary as well as consult with an attorney if death, serious injury, loss of property or allegations of wrongdoing by the Program occurs.
4. If necessary, the Special Olympics Wisconsin staff will notify appropriate field staff, the insurance company, legal representative, athlete/family members, Board of Directors, key sponsors/volunteers and Special Olympics International.

POSSIBLE CRISIS SITUATIONS AND LEVELS OF IMPACT

In the event of a crisis situation at any level, it is critical that the appropriate Special Olympics staff or volunteers are contacted according to the list above. Below are levels of crisis situations, some of which require immediate attention to Special Olympics North America or Special Olympics, Inc. Headquarters staff:

Level 1 -- A minor incident or accident

- Delayed event (but to be held the same day)
- Sick participant not requiring hospitalization
- Injured participant/spectator/volunteer treated on-site or taken to emergency room but released
- Minor venue property damage
- Severe weather watch

Level 2 -- A serious incident, accident or situation

- Canceled event
- Postponed event
- Moved event/change of venue
- Injured or ill participant/spectator/volunteer – requiring hospitalization
- Food poisoning/contamination
- Allegations of wrongdoing by or arrest of a participant
- Allegations of wrongdoing by or arrest of a spectator/volunteer/staff/guest or celebrity (if financial, see level 3)
- Missing participant
- Illegal use of drugs/alcohol
- Major venue property damage
- Transportation accident
- Severe weather warning
- Honored Guest concerns, e.g.: crowds, protection, threats
- -Contact SOWI, SOWI contacts Special Olympics North America (SONA), SONA contacts Special Olympics, Inc. (SOI)
- Protests/Demonstrations
- -Contact SOWI, SOWI contacts Special Olympics North America (SONA), SONA contacts Special Olympics, Inc. (SOI)
- Allegations or actions against an organization that impacts Special Olympics (i.e., Paralympics, INAS)
- -Contact SOWI, SOWI contacts Special Olympics North America (SONA), SONA contacts Special Olympics, Inc. (SOI)
- Attack by the media against Special Olympics or constituents
- -Contact SOWI, SOWI contacts Special Olympics North America (SONA), SONA contacts Special Olympics, Inc. (SOI)
- Negative campaigning against Special Olympics or Special Olympics-involved party
- -Contact SOWI, SOWI contacts Special Olympics North America (SONA), SONA contacts Special Olympics, Inc. (SOI)
- Alleged discrimination against Special Olympics participant within or outside of Special Olympics
- -Contact SOWI, SOWI contacts Special Olympics North America (SONA), SONA contacts Special Olympics, Inc. (SOI)

Level 3 -- A critical incident or situation

All situations considered Level 3 should be directed to SOWI, SOWI contacts Special Olympics North America (SONA), SONA contacts Special Olympics, Inc. (SOI)

- National/State or Provincial declared emergency (e.g., natural disaster, power outage, terrorist attack).
- Actual impact of severe weather (e.g., hurricane, tornado)
- Flood (if it shuts down office operations)
- Bomb threat
- Contagious health threat or outbreak
- Missing participant or volunteer under suspicious circumstances
- Death of a participant
- Death of spectator or volunteer
- Fire
- Criminal activity
- Financial fraud or fundraising scandal
- Sexual abuse

WHAT THE MEDIA WILL ASK

Following is potential information the media may want to know, most likely in the event of a level 2 or 3 crisis situation. You should provide them with the media kit you already have prepared for the event so they have background on the event that was already being held before the crisis took place. **Media will ask what steps are being taken to prevent a repeat occurrence.**

Casualties

- Number killed or injured or who escaped injury (use caution with initial numbers).
- Nature of injuries received.
- Care given to the injured.
- Cause of death (Use caution and avoid assigning responsibility or blame).
- Disposition of the dead.
- Prominence of anyone who was killed, injured or who escaped.

Property Damage

- Estimated value of loss.
- Description of property.
- Importance of property.
- Other property threatened.
- Insurance protection (Do not discuss amounts of coverage).
- Previous emergencies in the area.

Causes

- Statements by participants.
- Statements by witnesses.
- Statements by key responders – the venue emergency response team, police, fire, etc.
- How emergency was discovered.
- Who sounded the alarm.
- Who summoned aid.
- Previous indication of danger.

Rescue and Relief

- The number of people engaged in rescue and relief operation.
- Any prominent person in relief crew.
- Equipment used.
- Care of destitute and homeless.
- How the emergency was prevented from spreading.
- How property was saved.
- Acts of heroism.

Description of the Crisis or Disaster

- Extent of crisis situation and duration
- Blasts and explosions.
- Crimes of violence.
- Attempts at escape or rescue.
- Collapse of structures.
- Extent of spill.

Accompanying Incidents

- Number of spectators and spectator attitudes.
- Unusual happenings.
- Anxiety, stress of families, survivors, etc.

Legal Actions

- Investigations, coroner's reports.
- Police follow-up.
- Insurance company actions.
- Professional negligence or inaction.
- Potential suits stemming from the incident.

FACT GATHERING AND FIRST RESPONSE TO MEDIA

1. The facts will be gathered from all involved for the preparation of an official statement. If someone is questioned before facts are gathered, **NEVER REPLY WITH “NO COMMENT.”** The reply should be:

“A statement will be released by Special Olympics Wisconsin after the organization has gathered all the facts and had time to review the situation.”

Misinformation and rumors can be extremely dangerous to the organization. You have no obligation to answer any questions you do not want to answer, so if a spokesperson does not know some information or prefers to not answer, the response should be *“I do not know at this time”* or *“the answer is not known but facts are currently being gathered.”*

2. Basically, gather the facts below. The statement should also include who you are working with, i.e. emergency personal, police, etc. ***These facts should be kept confidential and not released to media or by any party involved in the incident.***

From where is the person reporting the situation?

Who is the person reporting the situation (name and contact information) and how is the person involved with Special Olympics?

What numbers (office extension, home, mobile phone and pager) can the person reporting the situation be reached at if more information is needed?

What happened?

Where did it happen? _____

When did it happen (include date and time)? _____

Was there any damage, injuries or fatalities? Explain in detail.

Who else was involved or present (names and contact information)?

What actions have already been taken (law enforcement or other agencies contacted)?

Was Special Olympics Inc. headquarters, SOWI or the regional office notified? If so, who was contacted?

Has there been any media attention? If so, what outlet(s) (e.g., television, radio, newspaper, magazine, Internet)? Cite specific media alerted.

Other comments? _____

SAMPLE PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND SUGGESTED MESSAGES FOR POTENTIAL CONTROVERSIES

During a crisis situation, *DON'T*:

- × Speculate on the causes of the emergency.
- × Speculate on the resumption of normal operation.
- × Speculate on the outside effects of the emergency.
- × Speculate on the monetary value of losses.
- × Interfere with legitimate duties of media, as they cover the story or interview spectators.
- × Permit unauthorized spokesperson(s) to comment to media.
- × Attempt to cover up or purposely mislead the media.
- × Place blame for the crisis situation.
- × Accept responsibility for the crisis situation.

Although individual messages for all potential crises cannot be developed, the following are appropriate statements and positions that apply to possible controversies. Use the following sample public statements as a guide when the media needs an immediate response. Feel free to add more information about your event FOLLOWING the statements below. **Ensure that you express empathy/concern for victims in your vocal tone used during your message!** Take note that certain news situations involve external entities, such as law enforcement agencies or medical centers. These external organizations have their own policies for communicating to the media about their involvement in situations.

Crisis situation/traffic accident involving athletes

A (name vehicle) carrying Special Olympics athletes and volunteers to our event have been involved in an accident. Emergency response organizations have been alerted and all efforts are being undertaken to help those involved. As soon as we have more information, we will provide it to you. (May need to cancel your event for the day and re-schedule for a later date.) The health and well being of (athletes/volunteers/coaches/staff/all involved) is a primary concern. We are extremely saddened that this occurred.

Natural threat to operations/facilities

“The (venue/headquarters) was (threatened/damaged) by (day’s) (tornado/flood/fire or facility accident). There have been no reported injuries. Venues will reopen (day/time). The health and well being of (athletes/volunteers/coaches/staff/all involved) is a primary concern. We are extremely saddened that this occurred.”

Injury—no hospitalization required—no names shared

“An (athlete/coach/volunteer) was injured at the (venue/other location) at (time). Our on-site medical team responded immediately and (the subject) was treated for (minor type of injury). We are thankful the injury was minor and continue to focus on safety and well-being for our (athletes/coaches/volunteers). We wish the (athlete/coach/volunteer) a speedy recovery.”

Non-life threatening injury/hospitalization required—no names shared

“An (athlete/coach/volunteer) was involved in a (type) accident (when) and has sustained a (type) injury, according to (team official/other official). S/he is under a physician’s care at (hospital name). We wish (him/her) all the best for a speedy recovery and will continue to focus on the safety and well-being for our (athletes/coaches/volunteers).”

When injuries are confirmed—no names shared

“(Number) people were injured during (describe incident) at (location) in (city) at (time). (May need to add that cause is unknown but is being investigated.) The health and well being of (athletes/volunteers/coaches/staff/all involved) is a primary concern. We are extremely saddened that this occurred and are in the process of notifying the families. We will release names of those injured once families have been contacted.”

When families have been notified—names shared

***You may want to consider a joint briefing with a hospital spokesperson to comment on the condition and treatment of the injured. Otherwise, add information about the condition and treatment of the injured.

“We have learned that (name, title), was involved in a (type) accident at (location) at (time). S/he has sustained a (type) injury according to (hospital official) and is under a physician’s care at (hospital name). We wish (injured) all the best for a speedy recovery. The health and well being of (athletes/volunteers/coaches/staff/all involved) is a primary concern. We are extremely saddened that this occurred.”

Death

** Never make a public statement before family has been notified, and you have learned their wishes and coordinated with authorities to ensure that information is factual and correct.

“A (describe accident) occurred at the (location) in (city) at (time). Emergency response organizations have been alerted and all efforts are being taken to assess the situation. As soon as more information is available, we will provide it to you on the injuries. The health and well being of (athletes/volunteers/coaches/staff/all involved) is a primary concern. We are extremely saddened that this occurred.”

When death is confirmed, but families aren’t contacted yet

“(Number) people were killed during (describe incident) at (location) in (city) at (time). (May also need to indicate that cause is unknown and under investigation.) The health and well being of (athletes/volunteers/staff/all involved) is a primary concern. Our deepest sympathies go to the families of those who died. We are doing all we can to help (those who were injured/families of those who died) in this difficult time. We will release names once families have been contacted.”

Criminal activity

**In this case, strongly recommend joint briefing with law enforcement spokesperson.

“We have just learned that Special Olympics (athlete/staff member/volunteer) has been involved in (describe alleged incident). We do not know the details of the situation and will not speculate on the matter. Special Olympics is committed to producing a safe, world-class athletic event for Special Olympics athletes. We will cooperate fully with investigating agencies, and we intend to undertake a detailed investigation of our own. The health and safety of (athletes/volunteers/coaches/staff/all involved) is a primary concern. We are extremely saddened that this occurred.”

Missing athlete

**In this case, strongly recommend a joint briefing with law enforcement spokesperson.

“In cooperation with (authorities), Special Olympics is asking for the public’s assistance in locating an athlete who has been missing since (date and time). (Name of athlete) is (describe physical appearance, clothing, age, etc.) and was last seen (location/other details). Anyone who has information is asked to call (authority) at (phone number). We are extremely concerned and doing everything possible (cite specifics if appropriate) to find (name).”

Hostage situations/terrorism/bomb threats

**In this case, strongly recommend joint briefing with law enforcement spokesperson.

“Special Olympics has just learned of (describe hostage situation/terrorist activity/bomb threat) at (venue/location) in (city). We are working with authorities on the scene. In accordance with our emergency action plan, everyone at the site was evacuated immediately. We will provide information on the situation when it becomes available. The health and safety of (athletes/volunteers/coaches/staff/all involved) is a primary concern. We are extremely saddened that this occurred.”

Assault Accusation

“Special Olympics is aware of the allegations involving Special Olympic (name the staff member/volunteer/etc.) We exist to enrich and advance the lives of athletes with cognitive disabilities and are very concerned about everyone involved in the incident. The safety and well being of our athletes is always our primary concern. The local law enforcement officials are investigating and we are fully cooperating with them. The coach in question is not participating in our organization until this matter is resolved.”

INFORMING THE MEDIA

1. In order for Special Olympics Wisconsin to provide timely, accurate and consistent information to the public, no one other than the President of Special Olympics Wisconsin or the VP of Communications should discuss the crisis with the media for state games or the regional director for regional events. Credibility is built much easier if a select few remain the lead contacts.
2. State and regional staff should document all media contacts on one media log sheet of paper (see log in this crisis plan). This will ensure that calls are returned by their deadlines and all information released is tracked.
3. The spokesperson should coordinate with the Visual Media Manager to utilize Social Media ensuring there is constant and timely messaging in conveying the organization's official stance on the subject to the general public.
4. Never speak off the record. Provide the media with **ONLY** that information which has been officially released by Special Olympics Wisconsin.
5. The spokesperson should never respond with "no comment." This will often lead the media to draw their own conclusions. Instead say the same statement written on page 6:

"A statement will be released by Special Olympics Wisconsin after the organization has gathered all the facts and had time to review the situation."
6. Do not over speak. Just answer the questions and keep with your key message. Remember, only a few seconds of sound bytes or one or two statements will be recorded from you.
7. If there is no safety threat, reporters and photographers can be given escorted access to the site, but **MUST BE ESCORTED**. Ensure they are kept at safe distance and keep them all in one location for tracking purposes near the spokesperson. Provide equal opportunities and appropriate facilities for print and electronic media to be positioned during your statement.
8. Because the media work under tight deadlines, respond to inquiries quickly. Ask **WHEN** the information is needed. Make sure the right information gets to the reporter no later than the deadline, sooner if possible. Media can be your best friend, so be organized, honest and positive and all will go well.
9. Do not discuss illegal activity at any time. If it is assumed, or expected, say police are investigating; we are cooperating and refer all questions to law enforcement authorities.
10. If an injury/death has occurred, do not release the name(s) of the injured/deceased until next of kin (defined as immediate family) have been notified by authorities and they are aware that the info will be released. Consult with the public safety agency that has jurisdictional authority over the incident as well as an attorney prior to making public statements, especially if there is a death, serious injury, loss of property or allegations of wrongdoing by the Program.
11. In cases where media request interviews with family members, provide a liaison to family members so that the family can protect their privacy if they choose to.

MEDIA LIST

List all media outlets (newspapers, television, radio, social media or bloggers) you consider important to have on hand for contacting.

Publication: _____

Contact: _____ Phone: _____

Publication: _____

Contact: _____ Phone: _____

Publication: _____

Contact: _____ Phone: _____

Publication: _____

Contact: _____ Phone: _____

Publication: _____

Contact: _____ Phone: _____

Publication: _____

Contact: _____ Phone: _____

Publication: _____

Contact: _____ Phone: _____

Publication: _____

Contact: _____ Phone: _____

Publication: _____

Contact: _____ Phone: _____

Publication: _____

Contact: _____ Phone: _____

Publication: _____

Contact: _____ Phone: _____

Publication: _____

Contact: _____ Phone: _____

MEDIA LOG SHEET

(make copies if needed)

Name of person contacting you: _____

Which media outlet : _____

Date/Time of Call: _____ Phone Number: () _____

Return Call by (Date/Time): _____

Summary of Response: _____

Further Action Needed: _____

CRISIS FOLLOW-UP

Follow-up after a crisis is important for those involved to evaluate the situation and ensure that all information is known, determining any possible changes that might be utilized to prevent it from occurring again, and to ensure the facts remain consistent.

Hold a debriefing meeting as soon as possible for those staff involved. Don't forget to check social media outlets daily (for many weeks) following the crisis for any responses received from the public.

Keep it confidential; allow people to talk candidly without fear of reprisal.

Deal immediately with blame, guilt, anger and other strong emotions. Call in professional counselors if necessary.

Prepare for further potential problems. Team members should participate in post-crisis activities and should be thoroughly aware of the emotional standing of each of the interested audiences.

Make sure all participants are properly acknowledged for their hard work and commitment to Special Olympics Wisconsin.

Take appropriate actions to prevent such a crisis from occurring again.