

SOWI Return To Play Protocol

Last Updated: March 8, 2022

Special Olympics
Wisconsin



Special Olympics Wisconsin is dedicated to protecting the health and safety of our athletes, volunteers, coaches, officials, staff, and all that contribute to the success of our athletes in training and events. The purpose of this document is to provide Special Olympics Wisconsin local programs with information to assist them returning to training/play in the context of COVID-19. We are aware not all local programs will be ready to return to training/play at the same time, but it is our goal to provide the necessary resources for when they are. At the outset and throughout the process, please remember it is important that each athlete and their families/caregivers stay informed and make educated choices about when they are ready to return to play. No one should feel pressured – or pressure others – into a decision.

Throughout this document “participants” are defined as all Athletes, Unified partners, Coaches, Officials, Volunteers, SO Staff, and families/caregivers if they will not exclusively be in spectator only spaces.

Special Olympics has updated guidance on return to in-person activities to reflect the latest information on COVID-19. This guidance is based on the latest information from the World Health Organization (WHO), the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other health authorities and created in consultation with a team of global medical experts and with input from Special Olympics stakeholders.

The primary goal of this guidance has been and remains zero deaths due to transmission of COVID-19 at events. The secondary goal is to prevent outbreaks of COVID-19. While local and national guidance should always be followed, we are providing guidance above the local, state, and national levels to supplement – not replace – any state, local, or national 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.

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), 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 and vaccination rates as well as testing/monitoring/contact tracing/health system capacity.

Return to Play Activities Protocol

Special Olympics WI is utilizing the 7 day average of reported cases per 100,000 people to determine the level of COVID risk in the community. This statistic will guide activities based on a Low COVID Rate (Green), Moderate COVID Rate (Yellow), or Significant COVID Rate (Orange). This statistic updates daily and local data can be found on The Washington Post website: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/national/coronavirus-us-cases-deaths/>. For event planning purposes, the COVID Rate on the Monday prior to the event will be the numbers used for what COVID protocols will be in place at the event. Local Program's risk level is based on the number for their host county. If a local programs crosses counties, the risk level will be assessed based on the location of practices. If a Local Program's county does not post information, the default will be to the State Rolling 7-Day Average per 100,000 people. SOWI will follow the protocols based on the state vaccination rate. Since the vaccination rate is at 65%, SOWI will be following the protocols base on 51%-79% vaccinated. If a Local Programs or event knows the vaccination rate is higher than that, it will operate under the protocols that correlate with the known vaccination rate. SOWI will provide updates to Local Programs when their status changes.

Participation Risk Awareness and Acknowledgement

Prior to returning to any in-person Special Olympics activities, all participants are required to complete and return (1) *COVID-19 Participant Release Form* which provides information and guidance on assessing risk and acknowledges that participation could increase risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19 AND (2) the *Communicable Disease Waiver for Participants* which provides Program indemnification for Covid-19 related claims.

Participants who have tested positive and/or been diagnosed with COVID-19 must wait 10 days after symptom onset (or 10 days from test if asymptomatic) before returning to activity. If participants have tested positive and/or been diagnosed with COVID-19, it is recommended that they consult with a healthcare professional for medical clearance before returning to Special Olympics to sport or fitness activities. **Local Programs should ensure that all participants (e.g. athletes, unified partners, coaches, volunteers, staff, and families) are educated about all procedures and expectations for return to activities.**

Community Transmission (average daily new cases per 100,000 people)

		0 – 10	11 – 50	51 – 99	≥100
Vaccination Rate (percent of participants at event)	100%				
	80 – 99%				
	51 – 79%				
	≤50%				

LOW RISK	MODERATE RISK	SIGNIFICANT RISK	VERY 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) + Size restrictions (100 or less indoor) and additional SO precautions (see orange guidance)	Virtual activities only for groups of >10 participants. Groups ≤10 can gather with additional SO precautions (see orange guidance)

***KEY DEFINITIONS:**

- **Fully Vaccinated:** Two (2) weeks after completing all doses of a COVID-19 vaccine.
- **Participants:** Athletes, Unified partners, Coaches, Officials, Volunteers, SO Staff, and families/caregivers if they will not exclusively be in spectator only spaces.
- **Community:** Generally, the community is the county. IF data is not available for the county, then use the smallest community (e.g., state) for which the data is available.
- **PCR/NAAT:** PCR or NAAT is a type of viral diagnostic test for COVID-19.
- **Rolling 7-day average / 100,000:** a 7-day moving average, takes the case rates per 100,000 people for the last 7 days, adds them up, and divides it by 7.

****Resources for Identifying 7-day Rolling Average Case Rate:**

- The Washington Post: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/national/coronavirus-us-cases-deaths/>

LOW RISK	MODERATE RISK	SIGNIFICANT RISK
<p><u>Event Size and Venue Type:</u> Per local regulations.</p> <p><u>Pre-event Testing:</u> Pre-event testing is not required.</p> <p><u>Onsite Screening:</u> SOWI to have signage at events about preventative measures. No additional screening needed for athletes, volunteers, staff, or spectators.</p> <p><u>Masks:</u> Recommended for ALL participants.</p> <p><u>Travel:</u> If traveling from a moderate risk (yellow) location, unvaccinated individuals must have a negative COVID-19 test prior to traveling to a multi-</p>	<p><u>Event Size and Venue Type:</u> Per local regulations.</p> <p><u>Pre-event Testing:</u> Pre-event testing is required for unvaccinated participants prior to traveling to multi-day competitions. Negative test within 72 hours of the event. If a participant does not have a proof of vaccination submitted, they are assumed to be unvaccinated.</p> <p>PCR testing recommended; however rapid-antigen test (including at-home) testing can be used.</p> <p><u>Onsite Screening:</u> Local Programs to conduct screening and turn in screening forms at events. Screening form will include that the participant has a</p>	<p><u>Event Size and Venue Type:</u></p> <p>Outdoor only event: Size per local authority regulations.</p> <p>Indoor or indoor-outdoor event: ≤ 100 participants.</p> <p><u>Pre-event Testing:</u> Pre-event testing is required for all participants prior to traveling to Sectional or State level competitions. Negative test within 72 hours of the event.</p> <p>PCR testing recommended; however rapid-antigen test (including at-home) testing can be used.</p>

<p>day competition. COVID test should be from within 72 hours of traveling.</p> <p>PCR testing recommended; however rapid-antigen test (including at-home) testing can be used.</p> <p><u>Transportation:</u> Masking required for any SOWI transportation, unless all participants are vaccinated.</p> <p><u>Accommodations:</u> No limitation on number of vaccinated individuals sharing a room, per local regulations.</p> <p>If one individual is unvaccinated, max of 2 per room, unless living in the same household.</p> <p><u>Spectators:</u> Permitted. Separated from participants as much as possible.</p> <p><u>Meals:</u> No restrictions on meals.</p> <p><u>Non- Sport Gatherings:</u> No restrictions.</p> <p><u>Ceremonies:</u> Follow local size restrictions.</p> <p><u>Awards:</u> No restrictions.</p>	<p>proof of vaccination on file or Local Program volunteer has seen negative test result.</p> <p>Volunteers, Staff, and Spectators will answer screening questions and have information taken for contact tracing.</p> <p><u>Masks:</u> Masks are required for All participants indoors. Masks recommended outdoors when unable to physically distance.</p> <p><u>Travel:</u> Travel is permitted, with precautions.</p> <p><u>Transportation:</u> Masking required for all on SOWI transportation, unless all participants are vaccinated.</p> <p><u>Accommodations:</u> Up to 4 vaccinated individuals may share a room.</p> <p>If one individual is unvaccinated, max of 2 per room, unless living in the same household.</p> <p><u>Spectators:</u> Limited. Must be separated from athletes and not attend participant areas.</p> <p><u>Meals:</u> Recommend no self-serve buffet meals. Participants should bring own water bottles. Stagger mealtimes and dining groups as much as possible.</p> <p><u>Non-Sport Gatherings:</u> Minimize large social gatherings, where possible.</p> <p><u>Ceremonies:</u> Follow local size restrictions.</p> <p><u>Awards:</u> No restrictions.</p>	<p><u>Onsite Screening:</u> Local Programs to conduct screening and turn in screening forms at events. Screening form will include that Local Program volunteer has seen negative test result for each participant.</p> <p>Volunteers, Staff, and Spectators will answer screening questions and have information taken for contact tracing.</p> <p><u>Masks:</u> Required for ALL participants, except during rigorous exercise.</p> <p><u>Travel:</u> Not permitted outside of state.</p> <p><u>Transportation:</u> Private transportation encouraged as much as possible. Masking required for all on any SOWI transportation.</p> <p><u>Accommodations:</u> Overnight events with accommodations organized by SOWI not permitted.</p> <p><u>Spectators:</u> Limited. Must be separated from athletes and not attend participant areas.</p> <p><u>Meals:</u> Participants bring their own meals and water bottles and/or pick-up only.</p> <p><u>Non-Sport Gatherings:</u> Minimize large social gatherings, where possible. Maximum 100 participates for indoor or indoor-outdoor events.</p> <p><u>Ceremonies:</u> Follow local size restrictions.</p> <p><u>Awards:</u> Distance when possible. Find alternatives to placing awards around the athletes' necks.</p> <p><u>Multi-Day Events:</u> Multi-day/overnight events not permitted. Multi-day events will be shortened to single day competition or cancelled.</p>
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The most updated list of sports offered by SOWI can be found on the website: <https://www.specialolympicswisconsin.org/sports-offered/>.

Guidelines for Return to Play

Prepare for Activity

- Based on currently available information from the CDC and clinical expertise, older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions might be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Athletes/Unified Partners/Coaches/Volunteers with underlying health conditions may want to seek guidance by their medical professional as to their participation.
 - Vulnerable individuals include people over sixty-five (65) years of age, people that are pregnant, people in long-term care facilities, people with compromised or weakened immune systems, and people with serious underlying health conditions including high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, serious heart conditions, liver disease, kidney disease requiring dialysis, diabetes, obesity, or asthma.
 - All participants are required to complete and return a COVID-19 *Participant Release Form*, which provides information and guidance on assessing risk and acknowledges that participation could increase risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19.
 - All participants are required to complete and return a *Communicable Diseases Waiver*, which provides Program indemnification for Covid-19 related claims.
- Prior to attendance, educate all participants on:
 - High-risk conditions and the risks of participation.
 - Requirement that anyone who has symptoms must stay home and to contact their own health provider if they are sick for further evaluation.
 - Current requirements for in-person gathering, including PPE, hygiene, and physical distancing.
- Remind participants to bring needed PPE and, if used, their own water bottle, and towel. Have facemasks/PPE available for those who are unable to bring.
- Have reminders/signage posted that reinforces appropriate protocols, use of PPE relevant to the activity, hygiene and physical distancing.
- Have hand sanitizer or handwashing facilities available at venue.
- If in Moderate Risk (yellow) or Significant Risk (orange) protocols, have COVID screening process in place and coaches/staff/volunteers prepared to implement prior to or upon arrival at event. (see additional guidance on screening protocol below).
- In Moderate Risk (yellow), unvaccinated participants must have a negative COVID-19 test prior to traveling to a multi-day event. In Significant Risk (orange), all participants must have a negative COVID-19 test prior to traveling to a Sectional or State level competition. Test must be from within 72 hours of the event. PCR testing recommended; however rapid-antigen test (including at-home) testing can be used.

Activity Guidelines

- The single most effective way to limit the spread of COVID-19 is to require any participant that is sick or having symptoms of an illness to STAY HOME regardless of what is causing the illness.
- If in Moderate Risk (yellow) or Significant Risk (orange): On arrival, conduct screening for ALL PARTICIPANTS (*see screening protocol below*). All participants with symptoms, a history of recent (last 10 days) COVID exposure, or temperature > 100.4° F must not proceed to the activity.
- Participants must be able to comply with appropriate physical distancing guidelines recommended by the CDC at all activity sessions. Outside of sport activities, maintain at least 6 feet from any other person. Coaches must consider spacing in the training area to comply with physical distancing guidelines.
- In Low Risk (green): Masks are recommended for all participants.
- In Moderate Risk (yellow): Masks are required for all participants indoors. Masks are recommended outdoors when unable to physically distance.
- In Significant Risk (orange): Masks are required for anyone at Special Olympics Wisconsin activities including practices and competitions except during rigorous activity.
- Participants may share equipment when circumstances require it.
- Make hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, soap and water, or similar cleaning or washing materials readily available at practice/activity sites. Hand sanitizer should be used after blowing/ wiping nose, sneezing, and after contact with shared equipment.

- To minimize gathering sizes follow the Risk Category spectator protocols. If spectator numbers should be limited or if spectators are not allowed, caregivers may be required to drop off athletes or remain in their vehicle until the completion of activities.

Infection Control Guidelines

- Read and help distribute the documents on COVID-19 and Health Fact Sheets supplied by SOWI.
- Special Olympics encourages everyone who has access to the COVID-19 vaccine, to get vaccinated to keep safe and save lives. People with ID are a high-risk group for COVID-19 illness, complications and death. The vaccine will help protect you from getting COVID-19. If you still get infected after you get vaccinated, the vaccine works to prevent serious illness. By getting vaccinated, you also help protect people around you.
- Athletes and volunteers need to self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 daily. If any signs or symptoms of infection are present, the participant should not attend any Special Olympics trainings or activities.
- Cover coughs or sneezes (into the sleeve or elbow, not hands).
- Wash hands with soap and water for at least twenty (20) seconds as frequently as possible or use hand sanitizer: after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects frequently.
- In Low Risk (green): Masks are recommended for all participants.
- In Moderate Risk (yellow): Masks are required for all participants indoors. Masks are recommended outdoors when unable to physically distance.
- In Significant Risk (orange): Masks are required for anyone at Special Olympics Wisconsin activities including practices and competitions.
- If someone tests positive for COVID-19 that attended a practice/team activity:
 - The individual tested positive must wait 10 days after symptom onset (or 10 days from test if asymptomatic) before returning to activity.
 - Individuals that were exposed to COVID-19 and are fully vaccinated can continue to attend SOWI activities, unless they begin to show symptoms.
 - Individuals that were exposed to COVID-19 and are not fully vaccinated or unvaccinated must wait 10 days after exposure before returning to activity.

Training Sites & Equipment

- Social distancing (6 feet) should be practiced when possible outside of sport participation.
- Training session sizes should adhere to the COVID Risk level protocols. It is recommended that training takes place outdoors or in an area with space for distancing when possible.
- It is recommended that participants use their own equipment during training. This includes the participant's own water bottle, towel, etc. where applicable.
- It is recommended that personal equipment be cleaned with disinfectant before and after each use.

Onsite Screening Protocol for COVID-19 for Moderate Risk (yellow) and Significant Risk (orange)

Regular education must be provided to all athletes, staff, volunteers, coaches, families and caregivers reminding them stay 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 his or her own health provider for further evaluation.

However, in addition to this education, before or prior to entering an activity, practice, event, or gathering, in Moderate Risk (yellow) or Significant Risk (orange) protocols, **all participants must undergo the following screening protocol:**

1. Create a Check-In Station adhering to physical distancing guidelines.
 - a. The screener will be responsible for self-monitoring before practice/activity.
 - b. The screener should wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. The screener must also wear a facemask.
 - c. Only one participant should check-in at the station at a time. Should a line form at the check-in station, those waiting should ensure they practice safe physical distancing of 6ft.
2. Ask each participant the following questions (reinforced through visuals and verbally, such as a paper with icons):

- a. In the last 10 days, have you had contact with someone who has been sick with COVID-19?
 - i. If yes, they should quarantine per local regulations.
 - b. Have you had a fever in the last week (temperature of 100.4°F or higher)?
 - c. Do you have a cough and/or difficulty breathing?
 - d. Do you have any other signs or symptoms of COVID-19 (fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea)?
3. Record all names, results and contact information and keep in case needed for contact tracing or reporting (*Template available in supplemental materials*).
- a. If yes to any questions, 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.
 - b. 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 Wisconsin to return earlier.
 - c. Participants who have tested positive and/or been diagnosed with COVID-19 must wait 10 days after symptom onset (or 10 days from test if asymptomatic) before returning to activity. If participants have tested positive and/or been diagnosed with COVID-19, it is recommended that they consult with a healthcare professional for medical clearance before returning to Special Olympics to sport or fitness activities.