

# Frequently Asked Questions for COVID-19

Last Updated: March 8, 2022

Special Olympics  
Wisconsin



## Timelines and Risk Categories

### 1. What is the timeline for roll-out of updated Return to Play Protocols?

The updated Return to Play protocols will be implemented for the Summer Sports Season (Track, Swimming, and Soccer)

(3/8/22)

### 2. What are required of programs before the start practicing?

1. Coaches/LPM must attend or watch recorded online training session for seasonal information regarding COVID-19.
2. All Athletes and coaches must complete the COVID-19 Release Form which outlines the risks of participating during COVID-19.
3. All Athletes and coaches must complete Communicable Disease Waiver prior to, or turn in at practice.
4. Local Programs must have the materials and understanding of what Risk Level they are currently at a to perform screenings before every practice in Moderate Risk (yellow) or Significant Risk (orange) levels.

(8/5/21)

### 3. What dictates moving into a different Risk Level?

Local Programs will operate in protocols based on the Rolling 7-Day Average per 100,000 people. This statistic can be found on The Washington Post website here:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/national/coronavirus-us-cases-deaths/>. Program's risk level is based on the number for their host county. If programs cross 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 provide updates to Local Programs when their status changes. Since the statewide vaccination rate is 65%, SOWI will operate under the protocols for 51%-79% vaccinated. If a Local Program or event is known to have a higher vaccination rate, they will operate under the protocols for the known vaccination rate.

### 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)

(3/8/22)

## Coaching and Training

### 1. What is SOWI doing to ensure coaches are prepared for practice?

Special Olympics WI will provide notes for modifications made because of COVID-19 in the individual sport rules.

Special Olympics WI has a page on the website dedicated to education materials for Coaches, Athletes, and Family members (<https://www.specialolympicswisconsin.org/return-to-play-during-covid-19/>). This site includes educational videos for both coaches and athletes, as well as educational handouts and signage that can be used at practices.

We will be hosting seasonal coaches meetings to update coaches on changes in COVID-19 risks, SOWI offerings, and to share best practices. You can sign up for the Coaches Meetings by visiting this link:

<https://forms.gle/MpBFYTjAaMxEsucB8>

(6/1/21)

## COVID-19 Screening

### 1. For the screening form, when asking if you have had any exposure to COVID-19, how immediate should the contact / exposure be/have been?

Only report if the participant has had direct contact with someone who has had COVID-19, not that someone has been in contact with a friend who had another friend that had COVID-19.

(8/1/20)

### 2. What if our program doesn't have the capacity to do thermometer screenings onsite?

Thermometer screenings are no longer a requirement. (6/1/21)

### 3. What do Local Programs do with completed screening forms?

Local Programs will retain all forms for a minimum of 3 years. These documents will be used to help health authorities with contact tracing for any potential infections.

(8/1/20)

### 4. Does the COVID screening violate HIPAA (applicable in the US only)?

At this time, Special Olympics is exempt from HIPAA as HIPAA only applies if organizations/providers transmit personal health information (PHI) electronically for transactions that HHS has adopted standards including submitting for financial claims, or is considered a clearinghouse or a health plan. However, the Program and coaches should still put in place a process to protect health information as best as possible in terms of storing and sharing medical information.

(8/1/20)

### 5. If a Special Olympics participant was potentially exposed to an individual who tested positive for COVID-19 at a different location (e.g., their school or home or work) and not the Special Olympics event, do we need to shut down practice and have all participants quarantine?

1. The recommended protocol for Special Olympics activities would be that the individual who was potentially exposed must stay home and should not attend practice or SO events until 10 days after exposure. They should be reminded to monitor their symptoms and consult with a doctor to discuss the need for testing and/or treatment.

2. If the SO individual ultimately develops symptoms and test positives, then practice must be suspended for at least 10 Days and all participants should be notified, while maintaining privacy, that an individual at Special Olympics event they attended has tested positive for COVID-19. As with all recommendations, consult with your local guidance to ensure you are in compliance with local rules and regulation. (8/6/20)  
(8/1/20)

## Individuals at High Risk

### 1. Why are participants living in long-term care facilities considered high risk?

The list of individuals at high-risk is based on guidance from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and World Health Organization (WHO). Research has shown that individuals with disabilities living in long-term care facilities are at increased risks of transmission as well as complications. The intention behind this is in regards to individuals living in licensed long-term care facilities.  
(8/1/20)

### 2. Are we restricting participation, preventing athletes and volunteers from participating if they identify as "high risk"? Are we treating athletes and volunteers the same? i.e. do we restrict athletes and allow volunteers?

At this time, the recommendation from SOI is that all individuals who identify as high risk should follow CDC recommendations, but the guidance does not mandate that Programs must restrict participation on this basis. This guidance applies to all participants (athletes, coaches, volunteers, etc.). However, it is the responsibility of both SOWI and the Local Program to ensure that participants are provided education and information about hygiene and prevention measures, as well as who is considered at high risk (i.e. through release forms and educational materials) so they can make an informed decision regarding their participation. Additionally, the Local Program is responsible for implementing safety control measures to mitigate risk of all participants in attendance. When possible, SOWI is developing alternative ways for engagement via virtual activities for those programs and participants. This guidance will continue to be evaluated by SOI based on evolving clinical and legal considerations.  
(3/8/22)

## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

### 1. Are facemasks mandatory at all Special Olympics activities?

Masks, also known as cloth face coverings, help prevent the spread of the virus. Wearing a cloth face covering will help protect people around you, including those at [higher risk of severe illness](#) from COVID-19. The spread of COVID-19 can be reduced when masks are used along with other [preventive measures](#), including [physical distancing](#), frequent handwashing, and cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces.

[Here is a resource](#) from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Boggs Center to help explain the need for and the usage of masks for individuals with ID.  
(8/1/20)

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.

Significant Risk (orange): Masks are required for anyone at Special Olympics Wisconsin activities including practices and competitions, except during rigorous exercise.  
(3/8/22)

### 2. If someone says they have a medical reason for not being able to wear a facemask, how should a Local Program handle this?

At this time, if an individual is unable to wear a mask for any reason, they will not be able to participate in Special Olympics activities when required in Moderate Risk (yellow) or Significant Risk (orange) levels. The use of the mask is not only to protect the individual, but also to protect others in attendance and reduce possible transmission.  
(8/5/21)

## Pre-Event Testing

### 1. When is Pre-Event Testing Required?

In Moderate Risk (yellow): Pre-event testing is required for unvaccinated individuals attending a multi-day competition.

In Significant Risk (orange): Pre-event testing is required for all participants attending a Sectional or State level competition.

(3/8/22)

### 2. What is required as a proof of negative test?

A proof of negative test can be an emailed test result, screen shot of test result, or picture of at home test. All of these will have a timestamp which allows the person checking to know that it was within 72 hours of the event.

(3/8/22)

### 3. How is a negative test recorded?

A section will be added onto the pre-event screening for events that require pre-event screening. The Local Program Manager will check that they've seen proof of negative test on the screening sheet and then sign off on the screening sheet which is then turned in to Tournament Central.

(3/8/22)

## Sports Questions

### 1. How is Special Olympics Wisconsin adapting competitions to ensure safety during COVID-19?

Special Olympics Wisconsin will minimize risk for competitions by providing information and encouraging distancing at all Risk Levels. In Moderate Risk (yellow) and Significant Risk (orange) levels, masking, on-site screenings, and limiting travel radius of participants are implemented. SOWI will determine if an event can be held using these same guidelines.

(8/5/21)

### 2. What is the difference between In-Practice Competitions and In-Person Competitions?

SOWI will provide in-practice competition options for local programs. This allows local programs to participate in the sport without traveling to another location and interacting with new groups. During these competitions, local programs will submit a qualifying score for their athletes at the registration deadline. Those scores will be used to division their athletes against athletes from around the state. The local programs will then submit a final score by the Score Submission Deadline. The final score will be used to place the athletes within that division. If an athlete has a qualifying score but no final score, they will receive a participation ribbon.

In-Person competitions are SOWI run events that local programs will travel to an event to do their final competition.

(1/11/21)

### 3. Where do I find the updated information about sports offerings and rule changes?

Any COVID related rule changes, training plans, training videos, and virtual competition options can be found on the Sports Offered page on the Special Olympics Wisconsin website ([www.specialolympicswisconsin.org/sports-offered/](http://www.specialolympicswisconsin.org/sports-offered/)).

(1/11/21)

## Responsibility, Liability and Third Party Events

### 1a. Does this protocol apply to events hosted by a third party but at which Special Olympics participants are invited to attend?

If the event is hosted by a third party and Special Olympics athletes or participants are being invited to attend, the third party host organization should assume all responsibility. While a Program would defer to the rules and regulations of the third-party host, it is recommended Programs understand the safety and health measures the host will be implementing in order to help participants determine if they would feel safe attending. If Local Programs are responsible for organizing aspects of participation (e.g., travel, accommodation, etc.), it is recommended that you follow the protocols for those aspects at a minimum.

(8/1/20)

**1b. Does this protocol apply to activities hosted by Special Olympics Program such as Park & Rec, YMCA, ARC and Independent LLC organizations?**

If a partner Local Program is offering non-SOWI activities as part of their adaptive programming, they may follow their own guidelines but must do so strictly under their own purview and assume all responsibility. If the activity is held under the auspices of training and/or competition for Special Olympics WI, all rules and guidelines must be followed. Partner Local Program not following guidelines or judged to be circumventing the rules will be subject to suspension.

(8/1/20)

**2. In Significant Risk Level (orange) , does the number restriction for indoor activities include any non-Special Olympics staff may be running/employees of the venue/facility, or other members of the public at the same venue who are not part of our Special Olympics group, or just the Special Olympics participants?**

If venue staff will not be interacting with the athletes and are not consistently within 6 feet/2 meters of the Special Olympics group, these facility staff would not count against the 50 or less limit. If the facility staff are mixing with the group and within 6 feet/2 meters during the activity and/or will be leading activities, then they should be counted in the number of participants.

In addition to Special Olympics guidance, of course, Local Programs will have to follow the guidance of the venue/facility (as well as the local authorities) if more stringent in terms of number of participants allowed within the venue/facility overall. If there are other groups in the space, it is the responsibility of the venue to follow local guidance to control and applicable venue capacity limits and/or physical distancing requirements amongst groups in the venue. However, if the venue is not operating in a safe manner, or in conjunction with the general infection control precautions, the Program should consider switching venue or ceasing activities, until they can be done safely.

(8/5/21)

## **Medical Operations and First Aid**

**1. How do you handle a situation where first aid must be administered during an activity?**

First aid should absolutely be provided by coaches, volunteers, or staff if required during an activity, even if physical distancing is not feasible during the aid. If it is a medical emergency, call the local emergency medical services (E.g., 9-1-1 in the US). If it is a non-medical emergency, but basic first aid is needed, individuals providing care should follow proper hand hygiene and wash hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer and put on a surgical facemask and disposable gloves prior to administering first aid. Administer the first aid and then properly dispose of all supplies and gloves. After care is provided, ensure individuals follow proper hand hygiene and wash their hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer. All activities should have a basic first aid kit on site which should also include a surgical facemask, disposable gloves, and hand sanitizer/disinfectant.

(6/4/21)