



Return To Activities Protocol

Last Updated: March 1, 2021

Special Olympics
Iowa

As citizens, communities, and nations around the world resume operations and activities in the time of COVID-19, Special Olympics Iowa has developed guidance for its delegations 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 delegations 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 Iowa movement to continually monitor this ever-changing situation and adjust decision-making accordingly while adhering to the guidance contained herein. **Special Olympics Iowa COVID-19 response point-person is Senior Director of Sports & Programs, Dawn Criss.**

These are minimum guidelines for Special Olympics Iowa delegations 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 Iowa 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, delegations 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 Iowa movement is paramount.
2. Beyond a sports organization, Special Olympics Iowa 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 rates as well as testing/monitoring/contact tracing/health system capacity.

Phased Approach to Return to Activities

Special Olympics Iowa will adopt a three 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 Iowa activities in Phases 1 through 2, all participants are required to complete and return a *Participant Code of Conduct and Risk Acknowledgement Form*.

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 Iowa delegations 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 IOWA RETURN TO ACTIVITIES PHASES			
Phase 0 Prevalence: community transmission occurring Stay at home order in place for all individuals.	Phase 1 Prevalence: clusters of cases occurring Stay at home order is lifted, restriction on size of gatherings of ≤10 people.	Phase 2 Prevalence: sporadic cases reported Size restrictions on gatherings increased to ≤50 people.	Phase 3 Prevalence: No reported cases* No restrictions on size of gatherings and public facilities are open. <small>* In Epidemic or Pandemic stage</small>
<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, and LEADERSHIP (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 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) should continue to remain at home.</p> <p>PRACTICES, HEALTH/FITNESS, and LEADERSHIP (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>

In the following pages, precautions to mitigate risks are outlined for each phase. If these considerations cannot be met, delegations should not proceed to the next phase.

Mitigation and Precautions by Phase

PHASE 0 – All Individuals Stay at Home

Prevalence: Community transmission occurring.

Size: Stay at home orders. No gatherings of any size, public facilities are closed.

Phase 0 Comply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Follow local and federal restrictions regarding Stay at Home.
Phase 0 Educate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> COVID-19 response point of contact person for all activity is Dawn Criss, Senior Director of Sports & Programs <input type="checkbox"/> Educate all participants on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Benefits and risk of physical activity after COVID-19 infection. ○ PPE, hygiene, and physical distancing for safety. <input type="checkbox"/> Continue 'at home' activities to maintain fitness and activity levels.
Phase 0 Prepare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare appropriate resources for safe 'at home' activities. <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare participants for participation in virtual activities or virtual competitions. <input type="checkbox"/> Know how to communicate potential cases to local health authorities for testing and to the Special Olympics Accredited Program, while maintaining and respecting privacy laws.
Phase 0 Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Share resources digitally and activate participants virtually (or via mailings). <input type="checkbox"/> Virtual participants with COVID-19 symptoms should refrain from participating in activities and consult with a healthcare professional for further evaluation.

PHASE 1

Prevalence: Clusters of cases occurring

Size: Local gatherings restricted to ≤10 people, individuals at high risk should remain safe at home

Phase 1 Comply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure compliance with all local and national regulations, including for participation of individuals at high risk.
Phase 1 Educate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> COVID-19 response point of contact person for all activity is Dawn Criss, Senior Director of Sports & Programs <input type="checkbox"/> Prior to attendance, educate all participants on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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. ○ Requirements for in-person gathering, including PPE, hygiene, and physical distancing. <input type="checkbox"/> Following this education (e.g., video or handouts), all participants should acknowledge receiving education and confirm understanding of risks and participation procedures by signing <i>Participant Risk Acknowledgement Form</i> (See Supplemental material).

Phase 1 Prepare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Have COVID-19 screening protocol in place and coaches/staff/volunteers prepared to implement prior to or upon arrival at event (see additional guidance on screening protocol below). <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that the venue is disinfected or sanitized, especially bathrooms. <input type="checkbox"/> Must use outdoor, well-ventilated facilities. Where possible instruct participants to use single entry point (to allow for screening process) and separate exit. <input type="checkbox"/> No shared supplies such as towels and water/beverage bottles. <input type="checkbox"/> Minimize shared equipment. Equipment should never be used by one participant and then another without disinfection between uses. If equipment is to be used by multiple people during the activity, prepare a cleaning protocol and supplies to disinfect equipment between uses. <input type="checkbox"/> Remind participants to bring PPE and, if used, their own water bottle, towel, and equipment. Have facemasks/PPE available for those who are unable to bring. <input type="checkbox"/> Have reminders/signage posted that reinforces appropriate use of PPE relevant to the activity, hygiene, and physical distancing.
Phase 1 Prepare Continued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Have hand sanitizer or handwashing facilities available at venue. <input type="checkbox"/> Know how to communicate potential cases to the local health authorities for testing and to the Special Olympics Accredited Program (within privacy laws). <input type="checkbox"/> Remind participants that during transport to activities, it is recommended that participants should wear a mask if on public transport, such as a bus, trolley, subway or if carpooling which includes someone not living with them.
Phase 1 Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> On arrival, conduct screening for ALL PARTICIPANTS (<i>see screening protocol below</i>). All participants with symptoms, a history of recent (last 14 days) COVID-19 exposure, or temperature >100.4F/37.8C must not proceed to the activity. <input type="checkbox"/> Continue to provide a safe participation option for those who are at high risk and thus unable to participate in person (e.g. virtual/training at home). <input type="checkbox"/> Activities must comply with distancing guidelines at all times. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> No activities that involve direct or indirect contact (e.g., through a ball in the hand) can occur. Consider spacing for drills, etc. using visual guides such as tape, chalk, cones, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Maintain physical distancing and avoid close contact (e.g., high fives, hugs, huddles) during and after activity. <input type="checkbox"/> Wear facemasks throughout the activity, except during exercise, including upon arrival and departure. <input type="checkbox"/> Coaches and volunteers should minimize changes in personnel---groups should stay together and not change. <input type="checkbox"/> Delegations must provide reminders to participants on standard infection prevention measures (e.g., frequent handwashing, avoid touching face, cover mouth when sneezing/coughing, etc.) at the start and throughout event.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> No spectators should be allowed to congregate on the sidelines of activities. Individuals providing transportation for participants should remain in vehicles until sessions are over. If participants need assistance, caregivers may remain provided they also maintain distancing, hygiene and use PPE, including masks. <input type="checkbox"/> Maintain a list of all participants with contact details. This will allow for contact tracing should a participant be later diagnosed as having COVID-19 during the activity.
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PHASE 2

Prevalence: Sporadic cases occurring

Size: Local gatherings restricted to ≤50 people, individuals at high risk should remain safe at home

Phase 2 Comply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure compliance with all local and national restrictions, including for participation of high-risk individuals.
Phase 2 Educate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> COVID-19 response point of contact person for all activity is Dawn Criss, Senior Director of Sports & Programs. <input type="checkbox"/> Prior to attendance, educate all participants on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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. ○ Requirements for in-person gathering, including PPE, hygiene, and physical distancing. <input type="checkbox"/> Following this education (e.g., video or handouts), all participants should acknowledge receiving education and confirm understanding of risks and participation procedures by signing <i>Participant Risk Acknowledgement Form</i> (See Supplemental material).
Phase 2 Prepare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Have COVID screening protocol in place and coaches/staff/volunteers prepared to implement prior to or upon arrival at event (see additional guidance on screening protocol below). <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that the venue is disinfected or sanitized, especially bathrooms. <input type="checkbox"/> No shared supplies such as towels and water/beverage bottles. <input type="checkbox"/> Minimize shared equipment. If shared equipment must be used, prepare a cleaning protocol and supplies to disinfect shared equipment between uses. <input type="checkbox"/> Remind participants to bring PPE and, if used, their own water bottle, towel, and equipment. Have facemasks/PPE available for those who are unable to bring. <input type="checkbox"/> Have reminders/signage posted that reinforces appropriate use of PPE relevant to the activity, hygiene, and physical distancing. <input type="checkbox"/> Have hand sanitizer or handwashing facilities available at venue. <input type="checkbox"/> Know how to communicate potential cases to the local health authorities for testing and to the Special Olympics Accredited Program (within privacy laws). <input type="checkbox"/> Remind participants that during transport to activities, it is recommended that participants should wear a mask if on public transport, such as a bus, trolley, subway or if carpooling which includes someone not living with them. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If Special Olympics is providing transportation, participants must wear facemasks during travel.

Phase 2 Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> On arrival, conduct screening for ALL PARTICIPANTS (<i>see screening protocol below</i>). All participants with symptoms, a history of recent (last 14 days) COVID exposure, or temperature > 100.4F/37.8C may not proceed to the activity. <input type="checkbox"/> Activities must comply with distancing guidelines at all times. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Indirect contact (e.g., through a ball in the hand) MAY resume. Direct contact may NOT resume yet. ○ Maintain physical distancing and avoid close contact (e.g. high fives, hugs, huddles). ○ Wear facemasks throughout the activity, except during exercise, including upon arrival and departure. <input type="checkbox"/> Coaches and volunteers should minimize changes in personnel---groups should stay together and not switch up if possible. <input type="checkbox"/> Delegations must provide reminders to participants on standard infection prevention measures (e.g. frequent handwashing, avoid touching face, cover mouth when sneezing/coughing, etc.) at the start and throughout event. <input type="checkbox"/> Participants may share equipment when circumstances require it (i.e., soccer ball on the field). If shared equipment must be used, prepare a cleaning protocol and supplies to disinfect shared equipment between uses. <input type="checkbox"/> Maintain a list of all participants with contact details. This will allow for contact tracing should a participant be later diagnosed as having COVID-19 during the activity.
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PHASE 3

Prevalence: No reported cases.

Size: No restrictions on size of mass gatherings and public facilities are open.

Phase 3 Comply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that local and federal restrictions allow holding of mass activities. <input type="checkbox"/> If participants are traveling from different geographic areas, ensure all communities meet criteria of "no reported cases." If not, provide virtual opportunities for those communities/individuals to join.
Phase 3 Educate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> COVID-19 response point of contact person for all activity is Dawn Criss, Senior Director of Sports & Programs <input type="checkbox"/> Educate participants on standard hygiene practices. <input type="checkbox"/> Inform participants showing signs or symptoms of illness to stay home and contact their own health provider for evaluation.
Phase 3 Prepare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Consider use of <i>Participant Risk Acknowledgement Form</i> (See Supplemental material). <input type="checkbox"/> Have reminders/signage posted and announced that reinforces hygiene practices. <input type="checkbox"/> Know how to communicate potential cases to the local health authorities for testing and to the Special Olympics Accredited Program (as per applicable privacy laws).
Phase 3 Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> No pre or onsite screening required.

Below is our current list of sports that have been approved to begin practicing in groups of 50 or fewer, along with our sports that are not approved. **Approved sports are subject to change.**

YES	NO
Alpine Skiing	Basketball (team)
Athletics	Developmental Events
Basketball Skills (no team)	Flag Football (team)
Bocce	Soccer (team)
Bowling	Softball (team)
Cheerleading	Volleyball
Cycling	
Equestrian	
Figure Skating	
Fitness	
Flag Football Skills (no team)	
Golf	
Gymnastics	
Nordic Skiing (Cross Country)	
Powerlifting	
Roller Skating	
Snowshoeing	
Soccer Skills (no team)	
Softball Skills (no team)	
Speed Skating	
Swimming	
Tennis	

SCHOOLS

With regards to activities in schools, delegations should follow the school's protocols and guidance in terms of when and how activities may resume. If school activities transition into Special Olympics community activities (e.g., the final competition/tournament is hosted by Special Olympics), then proper return to play protocol and necessary precautions for Special Olympics events, as outlined in this document, must be followed.

If the school or community partner's guidelines are less stringent or in conflict with the guidelines of Special Olympics, the following guidance applies:

1. The school/partner leaders/authorities should be informed of the Special Olympics guidelines for determining return to play.
2. The possibility of high-risk conditions in populations within the movement is conveyed to leaders/authorities.

3. Decision-making and options are provided to students with and without ID to provide for equal treatment.
4. Parents, guardians, or other caregivers of youth participants are provided with education on Special Olympics guidelines and relevant acknowledgements (e.g. video)
5. Youth participants involved in Special Olympics branded/sanctioned activities are given the option to opt out without penalty and are provided options for safe at home activities.

Onsite Screening Protocol for COVID-19

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

However, in addition to this education, before or prior to entering an activity, practice, event, or gathering (in phases 1-2), for **all participants, the delegation:**

1. Must set-up a space for screening that maintains physical distance (6ft/2m) during screening.
2. Must ask the following questions (reinforced through visuals and verbally, such as a paper with icons):
 - a. In the last 14 days, have you had contact with someone who has been sick with COVID-19?
 - b. Have you had a fever in the last week (temperature of 100.4°F/37.8°C 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. Should conduct onsite measurement of temperature using thermometer (preferred non-touch thermal scanning thermometer if possible).
 - Fever equals temperature of 100.4°F/37.8°C or higher.
 - If high, may re-test after five minutes to ensure temperature is accurate.
4. Must record all names, results and contact information and keep in case needed for contact tracing or reporting.
 - 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 to return earlier.
 - c. Participants who test positive for/have COVID-19 must provide written medical clearance before returning to sport and fitness activities.

Questions?

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Get Started

1. Read all Return to Play Guidelines
2. Complete the COVID-19 eLearning Course
3. Contact Dawn Criss to discuss your delegations return to play
4. Begin practicing in groups of 50 or fewer

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

Additional materials available on the Special Olympics Iowa website:

- a. COVID-19 eLearning Course
- b. Return to Activities Protocol
- c. Participant Code of Conduct and Acknowledgement Form
- d. Screening and Tracking Report
- e. FAQs Sheet
- f. Higher Risk Fact Sheet
- g. Return to Play Field Signs

Resource Links

- a. Help During the Crisis
- b. Preventing the Spread of COVID-19
- c. COVID-19: What you Need to Know
- d. COVID-19: Training in a Safe Environment