

June 24, 2022

Special Olympics Georgia Return to Play Protocol

This updated guidance for returning to Special Olympics activities is based on information provided by Special Olympics, Inc., the latest medical information available and guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Preventions (CDC). The information should be used to help prepare local Special Olympics Georgia (SOGA) programs for a safe return to activities. **Special Olympics Georgia may make a change(s) in this plan dated for June 24, 2022, as we see necessary. SOGA will continue to evaluate practices, competitions, events and programming on an individual basis.** These are intended as minimum guidelines for SOGA **local and area programs** as they consider returning to activities and is intended to supplement – not replace – any state, local, or tribal government health and safety laws, rules and regulations with which similar organizations must comply. **In all cases, the more stringent set of guidelines is to be followed no matter the source** (i.e. if SOGA has more stringent guidelines, these are to be followed. If the local authority has more restrictions in place, those are to be followed.).

General Requirements for all Sports Practices/Trainings and Competitions

Special Olympics Georgia (SOGA) is continuing with the lifting of the suspension of sports training and local/area competitions effective June 24, 2022, in the following capacity. **Special Olympics Georgia may make a change(s) to this plan dated for June 24, 2022, as we see necessary.**

1. Local Programs can host practices/trainings/competitions at full capacity, utilizing the suggested COVID precautions detailed within this memo. The trainings/practices/competitions should be limited to athletes, partners, coaches, and essential volunteers.

All events should be socially distanced at all times, as much as possible, during the session. If necessary, using staggered times for practices or competitions, actual physical barriers or signage/markings/ to indicate barriers, are some good options to ensure the session is as safe as possible.

2. All individuals in attendance (athletes, Unified Partners, coaches, essential volunteers, and spectators, if present,) must sign the SOGA COVID-19 Code of Conduct & Risk Assessment form and submit to the Local Coordinator prior to the first gathering. The Local Coordinator must keep all documents in a file for reference in case a participant develops COVID-19.

3. All practices/trainings/competitions can be held indoors and outdoors. All programs must follow and abide by all guidelines put in place by the ownership of the facility in which they are using. If a local or area program owns a facility (school, service center, Parks and Recreation facility, etc.) then the guidelines of that facility must be followed. If the facility being used is borrowed (bowling alley, park, etc.) then the listed SOGA guidelines must be followed.

4. Participants and venue set-up should practice and exhibit Social Distancing of maintaining 6 feet between themselves and others.

5. It is recommended that all participants wear masks, **except for athletes and partners in the physical act of competing/practicing in a sport.**

6. All hand shaking, high fives, hugs, or other physical form of contact are discouraged and participants should remain 6 feet apart off of the playing field.

7. It is recommended that all practices/trainings/competitions have a temperature check station, where all participants, have their temperature checked prior to attending the practice/training/competition. Local Coordinators should keep a log of all temperature check screenings for each and every practice/training/competition to reference back to if needed.

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8. If any individual has tested positive for COVID-19, they must have clearance from a physician to return to sports activities after the updated CDC guidelines of 5 days from the positive test result.
9. Care givers/people driving athletes or partners to practices/trainings/competitions should always remain in the spectator designated location outside of the practice/training/competition area and it is suggested for them to wear a mask. If an athlete needs 1:1 attention, the caregiver must sign and submit the SOGA COVID-19 Code of Conduct & Risk Assessment form and should remain with that athlete throughout and not move to help other athletes should need arise.
10. Cleaning of facilities, specifically hard surfaces with wiping down/spray with sanitizing agent, should be routinely performed but specifically before and after use. Consult with hosting facility to determine how often they clean or what their protocols are so any gaps can be made known and fixed if needed.
11. Any equipment such as weight benches, athletics pads, etc. having holes with exposed foam should be covered. Athletes should bring their own personal sports equipment, if possible, to avoid sharing of equipment during sessions.
12. Hand hygiene will be practiced with ample hand sanitizing stations and/or hand washing stations. Participants should wash hands for minimum of 20 seconds with warm water and soap or use hand sanitizer before touching common surfaces, equipment, or participating in workouts.
13. No shared water sources or equipment such as towels, shoes, sports specific equipment, or clothing. If shared water sources like water fountains are available in area, put a barrier around it to discourage use.
14. All participants are encouraged to bring own water bottle. Personal water bottles should be a minimum of 24 oz. in size to lessen need for refill and should be clearly marked with first and last name.
15. If food/meals should be provided at any practice/training/competition, they need to be individually boxed/wrapped and handed to each athlete, partner, or coach.
16. Coaches should pack several pairs of gloves to go along with their first aid kits to help with medical aid, but also incase trash is left in practice area.

****For those programs planning to attend State Games, these SOGA guidelines must be followed as well as any additional protocols communicated by the SOGA Games Director.**



Fundraising

All Special Olympics Georgia Agencies can continue fundraising activities; however, the following items are requirements and restrictions that must be adhered to in order for the fundraisers to be approved by Special Olympics Georgia:

- Special Olympics Georgia Athletes are allowed to participate in any in-person indoor fundraising event, as long as the Athlete is vaccinated. If the Athlete is not vaccinated, then the Athlete would be required to have a negative COVID test result 24 hours prior to the fundraiser. If a fundraising event is in a virtual format, Special Olympics Athletes can participate.
- Masks, gloves, hand sanitizing stations and social distancing are recommended during any in-person fundraising event.
- The Special Olympics Georgia Fundraising Authorization form must be completed and submitted to the State Office at least 30 days prior to the fundraiser date. The fundraiser **MUST** be approved by Special Olympics Georgia in order to host.

Special Olympics Georgia will continue to provide updates and modifications concerning all return to play activities, as well as when additional programming can begin. We appreciate all cooperation during these challenging times. For any questions, please contact David Crawford at david.crawford@specialolympicsga.org or (229) 292-5143.

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