



October 12, 2021

Special Olympics Georgia Return to Play Protocol

This 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 Prevention (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 October 12, 2021, 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 lifting the suspension of sports training and local/area competitions effective October 12, 2021 in the following, limited capacity. **Special Olympics Georgia may make a change(s) to this plan dated for October 12, 2021, as we see necessary.**

1. Local Programs can host practices/trainings/competitions of 50 people or less at one time. The trainings/practices/competitions should be limited to athletes, partners, coaches, and essential volunteers. The number of people counted in practices/trainings/competitions includes staff, teachers, essential volunteers as well.

The 50 people 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.

If your practice or competition venue is large enough to allow for simultaneous, but separate groups of 50 people or less, please consult with SOGA first as part of your event planning to determine if larger total numbers may be possible. For this to be considered, the activity must be able to be conducted in compliance with the protocol and with divided, fully self-contained (no intermingling between groups), and generously distanced “pods” or groups of 50 or less. Non-essential people, who are individuals not involved with practicing, competing, or organizing and conducting the session, are strongly discouraged and should be at a distance.

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. Please see the SOGA COVID-19 Code of Conduct & Risk Assessment form at the end of this memo.

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.

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5. All participants must always 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 must remain 6 feet apart off of the playing field.
7. All practices/trainings/competitions must have a temperature check station, where all participants, must have their temperature checked prior to attending the practice/training/competition. Local Coordinators must keep a log of all temperature check screenings for each and every practice/training/competition to reference back to if needed.
8. If any individual has tested positive for COVID-19, they must have clearance from a physician to return to sports activities after 14 days from the positive test result.
9. Care givers/people driving athletes or partners to practices/trainings/competitions should always remain outside the practice/training/competition area and 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 NOT allowed to participate in any in-person indoor fundraising event. If a fundraising event is in a virtual format, Special Olympics Athletes can participate.
- Masks, gloves, hand sanitizing stations and social distancing must always be conducted 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.

WAIVER AND RELEASE OF LIABILITY, ASSUMPTION OF RISK AND INDEMNIFICATION AGREEMENT FOR COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

("Agreement") for SPECIAL OLYMPICS

In consideration of being allowed to participate in any way in Special Olympics sports training, competition or fundraising activities, the undersigned acknowledges, appreciates, and agrees that:

1. Participation includes possible exposure to and illness from infectious and/or communicable diseases including but not limited to MRSA, influenza, and COVID-19. While particular rules and personal discipline may reduce this risk, the risk of serious illness and death does exist; and,
2. I KNOWINGLY AND FREELY ASSUME ALL SUCH RISKS, both known and unknown, EVEN IF ARISING FROM THE NEGLIGENCE OF THE RELEASEES or others, and assume full responsibility for my participation; and,
3. I willingly agree to comply with the stated and customary terms and conditions for participation as regards protection against infectious diseases. If, however, I observe and any unusual or significant hazard during my presence or participation, I will remove myself from participation and bring such to the attention of the nearest official immediately; and,
4. I, for myself and on behalf of my heirs, assigns, personal representatives and next of kin, HEREBY RELEASE AND HOLD HARMLESS Special Olympics, Inc, Special Olympics *Georgia* their officers, officials, agents, and/or employees, other participants, sponsoring agencies, sponsors, advertisers, and if applicable, owners and lessors of premises used to conduct the event ("RELEASEES"), WITH RESPECT TO ANY AND ALL ILLNESS, DISABILITY, DEATH, or loss or damage to person or property, WHETHER ARISING FROM THE NEGLIGENCE OF RELEASEES OR OTHERWISE, to the fullest extent permitted by law.

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I HAVE READ THIS RELEASE OF LIABILITY AND ASSUMPTION OF RISK AGREEMENT, FULLY UNDERSTAND ITS TERMS, UNDERSTAND THAT I HAVE GIVEN UP SUBSTANTIAL RIGHTS BY SIGNING IT, AND SIGN IF FREELY AND VOLUNTARILY WITHOUT ANY INDUCEMENT.

Name of Participant: _____

Participant Signature: _____

Date signed: _____

FOR PARTICIPANTS OF MINORITY AGE (UNDER AGE 18 AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION)

This is to certify that I, as parent/guardian, with legal responsibility for this participant, have read and explained the provisions in this waiver/release to my child/ward including the risks of presence and participation and his/her personal responsibilities for adhering to the rules and regulations for protection against communicable diseases. Furthermore, my child/ward understands and accepts these risks and responsibilities. I for myself, my spouse, and child/ward do consent and agree to his/her release provided above for all the Releasees and myself, my spouse, and child/ward do release and agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Releasees for any and all liabilities incident to my minor child's/ward's presence or participation in these activities as provided above, EVEN IF ARISING FROM THEIR NEGLIGENCE, to the fullest extent provided by law.

Name of parent/guardian: _____

Parent guardian/signature: _____

Date signed: _____

Special Olympics Georgia Participant Code of Conduct

I understand I could get Coronavirus through sports, training, competition and/or any group activity at Special Olympics. I am choosing to participate in sports, competition and/or other Special Olympics activities at my own risk. During the time these precautions are needed, I agree to the following to help keep me and my fellow participants safe:

- ☐ I confirm that I do not have symptoms of COVID-19 and have not been in contact with anyone that has tested positive for COVID-19 symptoms in past 14 days (cough, shortness of breath, fever, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell)
- ☐ If I have COVID-19 symptoms, I will stay at home and NOT go to any activities until 14 days after all of my symptoms are over. If I am exposed to COVID-19 and have no symptoms, I can return 14 days after exposure.
- ☐ If I get or have had COVID, I will not go to any in-person Special Olympics Georgia events until 14 days after my symptoms end. I will go to my doctor and get written clearance before returning to any sport or fitness activities.
- ☐ I will have my temperature checked prior to leaving home to attend any training, competition and/or group activity.
- ☐ I will have my temperature checked upon arrival to any training, competition and/or group activity. If a fever exists, I will immediately depart to go home, this will include anyone I traveled with to this competition.

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- ☐ Special Olympics Georgia provided me the education on Special Olympics rules for COVID-19 and who is at high risk.
- ☐ I know that if I have a high-risk condition, I have more risk that I could get sick or die from COVID-19. If I have a high-risk condition, I should not go to Special Olympics Georgia events in person, until there is little or no Coronavirus in my community.
- ☐ I will keep at least 6 feet from all participants at all times. This includes bathrooms, delegation sitting area during competition, picking up food or snacks, Olympic Town, and seating during Opening Ceremony. I will not engage in hugging, hand shaking, or high fives.
- ☐ I will wear a mask at all times while at Special Olympics Georgia activities. I may or not have to wear it during active exercise, warm ups, or during competition.
- ☐ I will wash my hands for 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer before any activities. I will wash my hands any time I sneeze, cough, go to the bathroom or get my hands dirty.
- ☐ I will avoid touching my face. I will cover my mouth when I cough or sneeze and immediately wash my hands after.
- ☐ I will not share drinking bottles or towels with other people.
- ☐ I understand that no spectators are allowed at any training, competition, or group activity.
- ☐ I will only share equipment when instructed to. If equipment must be shared, I will only touch the equipment if it is disinfected first. If equipment must be shared, the appropriate cleaning supplies must be used to wipe down before the next athlete uses for competition or warmups.
- ☐ I agree to contactless pickups. Special Olympics Georgia will provide certain materials, HOD packets, t-shirts, snacks, water, etc. and understand that there will be no direct contact in picking up these items.
- ☐ I will only enter, leave, or move around the check-in and competition areas that my agency is assigned. I will continue practicing social distancing while in these areas.
- ☐ I will abide by Special Olympics Georgia's housing policy. Only the same gender will be allowed in each room. 1 person assigned to a dorm room. I will abide by the 10pm curfew.
- ☐ I understand that if I do not follow all of these rules, I may not be allowed to participate in Special Olympics Georgia activities during this time.
- ☐ I understand that any medical services needed for sickness or illness while participating at any Special Olympics Georgia event will not be covered by the Special Olympics Georgia insurance carrier, but instead will be covered by the insurance provider of the individual participant.

I HAVE READ THIS RELEASE OF LIABILITY AND ASSUMPTION OF RISK AGREEMENT, FULLY UNDERSTAND ITS TERMS, UNDERSTAND THAT I HAVE GIVEN UP SUBSTANTIAL RIGHTS BY SIGNING IT, AND SIGN IF FREELY AND VOLUNTARILY WITHOUT ANY INDUCEMENT.

Name of Participant: _____

Participant Signature: _____



Date signed: _____

FOR PARTICIPANTS OF MINORITY AGE (UNDER AGE 18 AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION)

This is to certify that I, as parent/guardian, with legal responsibility for this participant, have read and explained the provisions in this waiver/release to my child/ward including the risks of presence and participation and his/her personal responsibilities for adhering to the rules and regulations for protection against communicable diseases. Furthermore, my child/ward understands and accepts these risks and responsibilities. I for myself, my spouse, and child/ward do consent and agree to his/her release provided above for all the Releasees and myself, my spouse, and child/ward do release and agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Releasees for any and all liabilities incident to my minor child's/ward's presence or participation in these activities as provided above, EVEN IF ARISING FROM THEIR NEGLIGENCE, to the fullest extent provided by law.

Name of parent/guardian: _____

Parent guardian/signature: _____

Date signed: _____

Fact Sheet: Who is at High-Risk for COVID-19

Who is at higher risk of COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a new disease and information is changing on who is more likely to get COVID-19 and who is will have more complications. Based on currently available information and clinical expertise, people with intellectual and developmental disabilities may be at higher risk of severe illness resulting in death from COVID-19.

Current clinical guidance and information from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and World Health Organization (WHO) lists those at high-risk for severe illness from COVID-19 as:

- People 65 years and older. Risk increases with age.
- People who live in a nursing home or licensed long-term care facilities

Regardless of age, individuals with underlying conditions, such as the following, are or maybe at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19:

- People with chronic lung disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or moderate to severe asthma
- People who have serious heart conditions (including heart failure, coronary artery disease, congenital heart disease, cardiomyopathy, hypertension)
- People who are immunocompromised
 - Many conditions can cause a person to be immunocompromised, including cancer treatment, smoking, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications
- People with obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 30 or higher). To calculate BMI, refer to:
 - https://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing/bmi/adult_bmi/english_bmi_calculator/bmi_calculator.html
- People with diabetes (Type 1 and 2)
- People with chronic kidney disease
- People with liver disease
- People with dementia

The list may change as evidence is learned. Please review the latest list of conditions that put individuals at increased risk available at the [CDC website \(https://bit.ly/2VEJcSK\)](https://bit.ly/2VEJcSK)

If you are at a high risk, you may be putting yourself at risk when you return to activities with Special Olympics. But, you may also put your family and your teammates at risk. If you have these conditions, you should not return to Special Olympics in person activities until Phase 3.

If you have been diagnosed with COVID-19, you should consult with a healthcare professional for written medical clearance before returning to Special Olympics in person activities as serious cardiac, respiratory, and neurological issues may develop as a result of COVID-19.