



***Special
Olympics***
Washington

**Special Olympics Washington
Return to Activities
(RTA) Guide**

Spring Season 2022

Current as of 02/16/22

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Guidance on COVID-19 Return to Activities

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.

Stephen Opland, Director of Competitions and Operations, is Special Olympics Washington's designated COVID-19 response point-person to keep current with return to activity levels and all compliance requirements, coordinate response and monitor the latest COVID-19 developments and their impact on the organization. For questions or concerns, please email rta@SpecialOlympicsWashington.org. These documents are intended as minimum guidelines for Special Olympics Washington as the organization begins returning to activities. **This document is intended to supplement – not replace – any state, 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. 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. Similarly, programs should immediately consult with legal and/or insurance counsel regarding any liability or coverage related questions.

Throughout this document “participants” are defined as all athletes, Unified partners, coaches, volunteers, family members, caregivers, staff or others in attendance of an activity. This guidance is intended for all in-person activities (e.g., sports practices, competition, coaches training, Young Athletes, Healthy Athletes, program-hosted Unified Champion Schools (UCS) activities, Athlete Leadership, volunteer meetings/trainings, etc.). School-hosted activities and fundraising events are considered separate from this framework and programs should follow regulations and COVID protocols from their school and local authorities, respectively for those events.

This document and its contents are current as of 02/16/2022.

Guiding Principles

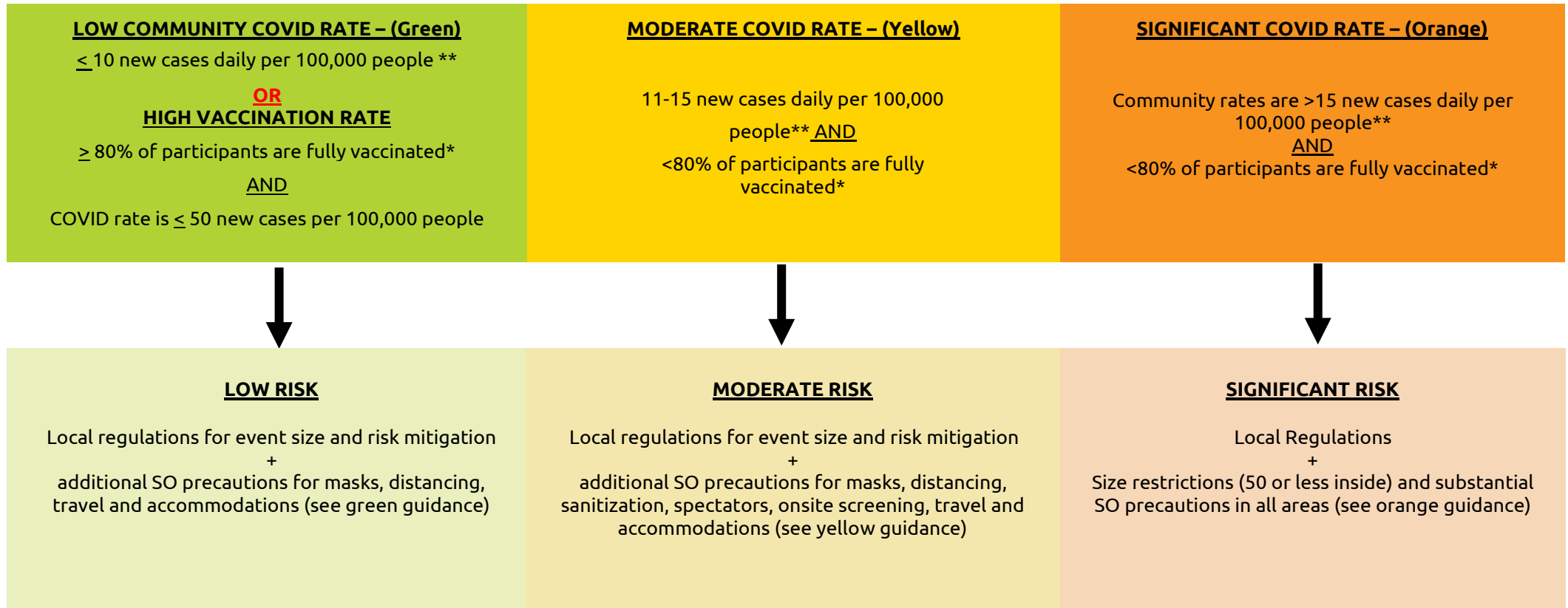
1. The health and safety of all members of the Special Olympics movement is paramount.
2. Beyond a sports organization, Special Olympics is a movement for and by people with intellectual disabilities (ID), and its guidance must be inclusive and directed at the unique needs and abilities of people with 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.
5. Guidance takes a risk level approach that is dependent on local transmission rates, vaccination rates as well as testing/monitoring/contact tracing/health system capacity.

Special Olympics Washington Return to Activities Protocol



Revised June 2021

If in-person activities are permitted in your local area, follow below guidance (color chart) to determine protocols needed, in addition to local regulations.



*KEY DEFINITIONS:

- **Fully Vaccinated:** Two (2) weeks after completing all doses of a COVID-19 vaccine. Boosters are not required to be fully vaccinated.
- **Participants:** Athletes, Unified partners, coaches, officials, volunteers, Special Olympics Washington staff, and families/caregivers if they will not exclusively be in spectator only spaces.
- **Community:** The community is the county/district.
- **PCR/NAAT:** PCR or NAAT, is a type of viral diagnostic test for COVID-19.
- **Rolling 14-day average/100,000:** Washington is a 14-day moving average, takes the case rates per 100,000 people for the last 14 days, adds them up, and divides it by 14.

2022 Spring Season Risk Level

In June 2021 Special Olympics International (SOI) revised their Return to Activities (RTA) protocols that are structured around a three-risk level approach (*Low, Moderate, Significant Risk*). Level of risk is determined by the number of average daily new COVID cases per 100,000 or/and percent of fully vaccinated individuals. Click [here](#) to learn more about SOI's protocols.

For the 2022 Spring Season, Special Olympics Washington will be operating under the "Modified-Moderate Risk" protocols listed below.

Protocols	<u>Modified-Moderate Risk</u>														
Event Size and Venue Type (indoors/outdoors)	Refer to sports-specific protocols														
Type of sport/activity	<table border="0"> <tr> <td data-bbox="659 747 818 779">Competitive</td> <td data-bbox="919 747 1138 779">Non-Competitive</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="659 779 818 810">Soccer</td> <td data-bbox="919 779 1016 810">Bowling</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="659 810 818 842">Athletics</td> <td data-bbox="919 810 1040 842">Volleyball</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="659 842 818 873">Swimming</td> <td data-bbox="919 842 992 873">Bocce</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="659 873 818 905">Powerlifting</td> <td data-bbox="919 873 1078 905">Flag Football</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="659 905 818 936">Cycling</td> <td data-bbox="919 905 1053 936">Gymnastics</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td data-bbox="919 936 1248 968">School of Strength (<i>Virtual</i>)</td> </tr> </table> <p data-bbox="646 1024 1276 1056">Stagger start times to reduce crowding at the event.</p>	Competitive	Non-Competitive	Soccer	Bowling	Athletics	Volleyball	Swimming	Bocce	Powerlifting	Flag Football	Cycling	Gymnastics		School of Strength (<i>Virtual</i>)
Competitive	Non-Competitive														
Soccer	Bowling														
Athletics	Volleyball														
Swimming	Bocce														
Powerlifting	Flag Football														
Cycling	Gymnastics														
	School of Strength (<i>Virtual</i>)														
Forms	Athletes, coaches, Unified partners, officials, volunteers, and staff complete the COVID Code of Conduct & Waiver form. These forms do not expire.														
Onsite Screening	<p data-bbox="646 1297 1239 1392">Verbal confirmation of no symptoms for all participants and spectators + onsite temperature checks on arrival (each day, if multiple days).</p> <p data-bbox="646 1423 1255 1549">Signage on preventive measures (handwashing, distancing and masking) and education on symptoms and reminder to stay home if sick or any symptoms.</p>														
Positive COVID test or previous COVID disease	<p data-bbox="646 1612 1227 1675">No participation within 5 days of COVID positive test. Additional 5 days of strict mask wearing.</p> <p data-bbox="646 1707 1162 1801">Athletes and Unified partners must receive medical clearance prior to participating in sport.</p> <p data-bbox="646 1833 1187 1864">Programs must educate on this requirement.</p>														

<p>Masking</p> <p><i>*Masking requirements may be more stringent if Program chooses based on local situation.</i></p>	<p>Masks required for ALL participants, especially when indoors, except during rigorous exercise.</p>
<p>Distancing</p>	<p>Distancing required at all times.</p>
<p>Travel</p>	<p>Permitted, with precautions. Private transportation encouraged as much as possible. Social distancing on any shared transport organized by SO.</p> <p>If traveling with members from outside of home, masks must be worn at all times, regardless of vaccine status.</p> <p>Public transportation or rideshare service, all individuals must abide by transportation company's masking/safety requirements.</p>
<p>Sanitization</p>	<p>Sanitization protocol for all communal shared areas (e.g., bathrooms, meal areas) and frequently touched surfaces + shared equipment between uses. Refer to sport-specific protocols for equipment sanitization.</p>
<p>Spectators</p> <p>Sideline observers (e.g., family/support staff)</p>	<p>Limited. Must be separated from athletes and not attend participant areas.</p>
<p>Meals</p>	<p>No self-serve buffet meals. Participants bring own water bottles.</p> <p>Stagger mealtimes and cohort groups as much as possible.</p>
<p>Non-Sport Gatherings (during Competitions)</p>	<p>Follow size restrictions, venue options and risk mitigation guidance per above.</p> <p>Minimize large social gatherings (e.g., community dances, athlete festivals) where possible.</p>

Ceremonies	<p>Follow size restrictions, venue options and risk mitigation guidance per above.</p> <p>For award ceremonies, strongly recommend outdoors.</p>
Young Athletes (YA)	<p>Children should wear masks during YA activities. All coaches and volunteers required to also wear masks.</p> <p>Distancing and outdoor activities are highly encouraged.</p> <p>Additional guidance for implementing YA activities in the Return to Activities protocol for young children.</p>
School-based Activities	<p>School-based activities led by schools are considered separate from this framework and should comply with guidance from schools/districts.</p>
Fundraising Events	<p>Fundraising events are considered separate from this framework and should comply with the guidelines and policies outlined in the Special Olympics Washington RTA Fundraising Plan.</p>
Healthy Athletes (HA)	<p>Follow size restrictions, venue options and risk mitigation guidance per above.</p> <p>See additional HA guidance on page 24 for discipline-specific precautions.</p>
Wellness & Fitness Programs	<p>Follow size restrictions, venue options and risk mitigation guidance per above.</p> <p>See additional Fitness & Wellness program precautions on page 24 for additional guidance.</p>
Athlete Leadership	<p>Follow size restrictions, venue options and risk mitigation guidance per above.</p> <p>See additional Athlete Leadership precautions on page 25 for additional guidance.</p>

Onsite Screening Protocol for COVID-19

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 their own health provider for further evaluation.**

How to conduct On-site Screening [video](#).

For **modified-moderate risk** level events, program:

1. Must set-up a space for screening that maintains physical distance (6ft/2m) during screening.
2. Must ask the following questions verbally for Yellow/Modified-Moderate risk level and in written form for Orange/Significant risk level (so you have documentation):
 - a. In the last 14 days, have you had contact with someone who has been sick with COVID-19?
 - i. If yes, they should self-quarantine per local regulations.
 - 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. Conduct onsite measurement of temperature using thermometer (preferred non- touch thermal scanning thermometer if possible).
 - a. Fever equals temperature of 100.4°F/37.8°C or higher.
 - b. If high, may re-test after 5 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 (*Template available in supplemental materials*).
5. If yes to any questions regarding symptoms and/or elevated temperature, 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.
 - a. Participants who are found to have COVID-19 symptoms must wait 5 days after symptoms resolve to return to activity OR must provide written proof of physician clearance to Special Olympics to return earlier.
 - b. Participants who test positive for/have COVID-19 must provide written medical clearance before returning to sport and fitness activities.

Special Olympics Washington Proof of Vaccination Status

Updated as of November 29, 2021

Based on current and impending mandates that some Washington counties are enforcing which require proof of vaccination or negative COVID test to enter a facility or attend an in-person indoor event, Special Olympics Washington will be acting under the following protocols to ensure we are abiding by COVID mandates put forth by the CDC, the Washington State Department of Health, and local health authorities.

Any Special Olympics Washington program or event residing within a county or using a facility that requires proof of vaccination or negative COVID test must abide by the county or facility's mandate to ensure the health and safety of all participants.

While Special Olympics Washington does not require proof of vaccination or negative COVID test for participants or spectators to attend in-person activities, we recognize the value and importance of these new mandates and will follow any COVID-related requirements and protocols put forth by each counties' health authorities.

Special Olympics Washington will do everything we can to provide support and resources so that our athletes, coaches and volunteers may continue in-person activities in the safest way possible.

Special Olympics Washington will continue to monitor the status of COVID-related mandates and protocols on the state and county levels. Should an existing program's county require proof of vaccination or negative COVID test, we will work closely with each program to ensure all protocols are followed and provide necessary recourses.

We appreciate everyone's hard work and understanding as we strive to provide the best quality sports and events in the safest manner during these unprecedented times.

For questions, please contact your region manager, or email: rta@sowa.org

Resources

Local Health Jurisdiction Information

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/AboutUs/PublicHealthSystem/LocalHealthJurisdictions>

Washington State Mandates

<https://www.governor.wa.gov/VaccineMandateFAQ>

Washington State Test Sites

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/COVID19/TestingforCOVID19/TestingLocations>

Sports Offered by Special Olympics Washington for the Spring Season

After reviewing the [Sports Risk Assessment](#) from SOI, Special Olympics Washington will be providing the below sports for this Spring season to ensure the safety of our athletes and volunteers while re-engaging with each other in-person.

Athletes and **Unified partners** may participate in (1) one in-person sport along with a health component and virtual event for the Spring season.

Coaches and **volunteers** can work with multiple teams if following the sports specific protocols and being listed on each team's approved roster.

Competitive

Soccer
Athletics
Swimming
Powerlifting
Cycling

Non-Competitive

Bowling
Volleyball
Bocce
Flag Football
Gymnastics
School of Strength (*Virtual*)

*Health and wellness programs (such as Fit 5) can be facilitated at your sports practices. You can indicate interest in both your Pre and Final registration.

Soccer Protocols

In-person Soccer can return to training in Washington State following the requirements outlined in the Return to Activities plan, as well as the specific sport requirements below. Any program not following the Special Olympics Washington or sport-specific guidelines will be asked to stop trainings immediately.

Requirements

- 1) Facemasks are required to be worn by all participants except while actively training or competing. Masks must be worn while on the sidelines in-between play.
- 2) Verbal confirmation of no symptoms for all participants and spectators, as well as onsite temperature checks required.
- 3) All participants must use hand sanitizer, or thoroughly wash their hands prior to, and after play.
- 4) Coaches are required to keep an updated roster and track attendance for each practice should a COVID case arise.
- 5) Volunteers/coaches who are assisting the team must be properly credentialed, listed on the team's approved roster and clearly identified with a name tag or some form of clothing.
- 6) To ensure a team does not need to forfeit due to positive COVID cases, Special Olympics Washington will be allowing team roster sizes up to (12) twelve players with (3) three coaches/chaperones for 5-a-side soccer.
- 7) Teams must have a sufficient athlete to coach ratio to ensure all COVID protocols and safety measures are met.

Social Distancing

- 1) No more than (30) thirty personnel (*24 x participants + 6 coaches/chaperones*) on a Special Olympics 5-a-side soccer field at a time for practice.
- 2) No more than (35) thirty-five personnel (*24 x participants + 6 coaches/chaperones + 5 volunteers*) on a Special Olympics 5-a-side soccer field at a time for competition play.
- 3) Spectators/family members must remain in a designated spectator area (6) six feet from sideline opposite the side of the team benches.

Equipment

- 1) Soccer balls must be cleaned with a disinfectant cleaner or wipe before and after use at practices, before each game for competition play, and in-between each athlete for individual skills competition.
- 2) Team benches/seats must be cleaned with a disinfectant cleaner or wipe before practice. Before each game for competition play.
- 3) All stop watches, clipboard, pens, cones, measuring tapes, etc. must be cleaned with a disinfectant cleaner or wipe before practice and competition play.
- 4) All participants must have and use their own water bottle.

Competition Format

- 1) To Be Determined

Additional Protocols

- 1) There will be no Opening Ceremonies at local and regional competitions. If feasible, opening remarks will be made prior to the start of competition.
- 2) Awards
 - a. Team Competition – Awards will be presented at each respective field directly after the game where a team placed within their division.
 - b. Individual Skills Competition – Awards will be presented at each team’s designated area once results have been calculated.
- 3) Lunches will be individually packed and brought to each team within their designated team area. Teams are not to come and collect their lunches.
- 4) Souvenirs will be available on-site. To ensure proper social distancing, teams and individuals may be asked to purchase souvenirs at a certain time.

Athletics (Track & Field) Protocols

In-person Athletics can return to training in Washington State following the requirements outlined in the Return to Activities plan, as well as the specific sport requirements below. Any program not following the Special Olympics Washington or sport-specific guidelines will be asked to stop trainings immediately.

Requirements

- 1) Facemasks are required to be worn by all participants except while actively training or competing.
- 2) Verbal confirmation of no symptoms for all participants and spectators, as well as onsite temperature checks required.
- 3) All participants must use hand sanitizer, or thoroughly wash their hands prior to, and after participation.
- 4) Coaches are required to keep an updated roster and track attendance for each practice should a COVID case arise.
- 5) Volunteers/coaches who are assisting the team must be properly credentialed, listed on the team's approved roster and clearly identified with a name tag or some form of clothing while participating with the team.

Social Distancing

- 1) Participants must maintain a (6) six-foot distance when not actively training or competing.
- 2) When able, use every other lane to help ensure social distancing during training and competition.
- 3) Teams can and should utilize both sides of the track to help with social distancing requirements. Teams can separate the sides of the track based on ability and/or specific events.
- 4) Spectators must remain in designated spectator area at all times and cannot intermingle with participants. Spectator area must be (6) six feet away from the training/competition site.

Equipment

- 1) No sharing of equipment that encounters the body.
- 2) If sharing of equipment is required, all equipment must be thoroughly cleaned with disinfectant spray or wiped down between uses.

Competition Format

- 1) To Be Determined

Additional Protocols

- 1) Opening Ceremonies – There will be no opening ceremonies at regional competitions.
- 2) Awards – Will take place after each heat. Staging area must allow for proper distancing while athletes wait to be awarded. If the staging area is not able to allow for proper distancing, Special Olympics Washington will work directly with programs to facilitate an awards ceremony for each individual program after the competition.
- 3) Lunches will be individually packed and brought to each team within their designated team area. Teams are not to come and collect their lunches.
- 4) Souvenirs will be available at specific locations during competition. To ensure proper social distancing, teams and individuals may be asked to purchase souvenirs at a certain time and location.

Swimming Protocols

In-person Swimming can return to training in Washington State following the requirements outlined in the Return to Activities plan, as well as the specific sport requirements below. Any program not following the Special Olympics Washington or sport-specific guidelines will be asked to stop trainings immediately.

Requirements

- 1) Facemasks are required to be worn by all participants except while in the pool.
- 2) Verbal confirmation of no symptoms for all participants and spectators, as well as onsite temperature checks required.
- 3) All participants must use hand sanitizer, or thoroughly wash their hands prior to, and after participation.
- 4) Coaches are required to keep an updated roster and track attendance for each practice should a COVID case arise.
- 5) Volunteers/coaches who are assisting the team must be properly credentialed, listed on the team's approved roster and clearly identified with a name tag or some form of clothing while participating with the team.
- 6) When possible, locker rooms should only be used for restroom purposes. All participants should dress at home for the training session/event.

Social Distancing

- 1) Participants must maintain a (6) six-foot distance while on the pool deck and in commons areas.
- 2) Spectators are not allowed on the pool deck and must remain in designated spectator area at least (6) six feet away from the training/competition site.

Equipment

- 1) No sharing of equipment that encounters the body (goggles, head cap, pool noodle, etc.)
- 2) If sharing of equipment is required, all equipment must be thoroughly cleaned with disinfectant spray or wiped down between uses.

Competition Format

- 1) To Be Determined

Additional Protocols

- 1) Opening Ceremonies – There will be no opening ceremonies at regional competitions.
- 2) Awards – There will be no awards presented at the pool. Special Olympics Washington will work directly with programs to facilitate an awards ceremony for each individual program after the competition. Results will be posted online and sent directly to each program.

- 3) Lunches will be individually packed and brought to each team within their designated team area. Teams are not to come and collect their lunches.
- 4) Souvenirs will be available at specific locations during competition. To ensure proper social distancing, teams and individuals may be asked to purchase souvenirs at a certain time and location.

Cycling Protocols

In-person Cycling can return to training in Washington State following the requirements outlined in the Return to Activities plan, as well as the specific sport requirements below. Any program not following the Special Olympics Washington or sport-specific guidelines will be asked to stop trainings immediately.

Requirements

- 1) Facemasks are required to be worn by all participants except while actively training or competing.
- 2) Verbal confirmation of no symptoms for all participants and spectators, as well as onsite temperature checks required.
- 3) All participants must use hand sanitizer, or thoroughly wash their hands prior to, and after participation.
- 4) Coaches are required to keep an updated roster and track attendance for each practice should a COVID case arise.
- 5) Volunteers/coaches who are assisting the team must be properly credentialed, listed on the team's approved roster and clearly identified with a name tag or some form of clothing while participating with the team.

Social Distancing

- 1) Participants must maintain a (6) six-foot distance at all times.
- 2) Spectators must remain in designated spectator area at all times and cannot intermingle with participants. Spectator area must be (6) six feet away from participants.

Equipment

- 1) No sharing of equipment that encounters the body.
- 2) If sharing of equipment is required, all equipment must be thoroughly cleaned with disinfectant spray or wiped down between uses.
- 3) Athletes must bring and use their own water bottle.

Competition Format

- 1) To Be Determined

Additional Protocols

- 1) Opening Ceremonies – There will be no opening ceremonies at regional competitions.

- 2) Awards – Staging area must allow for proper distancing while athletes wait to be awarded. If the staging area is not able to allow for proper distancing, Special Olympics Washington will work directly with programs to facilitate an awards ceremony for each individual program after the competition.
- 3) Lunches will be individually packed and brought to each team within their designated team area. Teams are not to come and collect their lunches.
- 4) Souvenirs will be available at specific locations during competition. To ensure proper social distancing, teams and individuals may be asked to purchase souvenirs at a certain time and location.

Powerlifting Protocols

In-person Powerlifting can return to training in Washington State following the requirements outlined in the Return to Activities plan, as well as the specific sport requirements below. Any program not following the Special Olympics Washington or sport-specific guidelines will be asked to stop trainings immediately.

Requirements

- 1) Facemasks are required to be worn by all participants except while on the platform and actively training or competing.
- 2) Verbal confirmation of no symptoms for all participants and spectators, as well as onsite temperature checks required.
- 3) All participants must use hand sanitizer, or thoroughly wash their hands prior to, and after participation.
- 4) Coaches are required to keep an updated roster and track attendance for each practice should a COVID case arise.
- 5) Volunteers/coaches who are assisting the team must be properly credentialed, listed on the team's approved roster and clearly identified with a name tag or some form of clothing while participating with the team.

Social Distancing

- 1) Participants must maintain a (6) six-foot distance at all times.
- 2) Spectators must remain in designated spectator area at all times and cannot intermingle with participants. Spectator area must be (6) six feet away from participants.

Equipment

- 1) No sharing of equipment that encounters the body.
- 2) If sharing of equipment is required, all equipment must be thoroughly cleaned with disinfectant spray or wiped down between uses.
- 3) Lifting bar and bench must be wiped down in-between each lifter.
- 4) Each athlete must bring and use their own chalk.

Competition Format

- 1) To Be Determined

Additional Protocols

- 1) Opening Ceremonies – There will be no opening ceremonies at regional competitions.
- 2) Awards – Staging area must allow for proper distancing while athletes wait to be awarded. If the staging area is not able to allow for proper distancing, Special Olympics Washington will work directly with programs to facilitate an awards ceremony for each individual program after the competition.
- 3) Lunches will be individually packed and brought to each team within their designated team area. Teams are not to come and collect their lunches.
- 4) Souvenirs will be available at specific locations during competition. To ensure proper social distancing, teams and individuals may be asked to purchase souvenirs at a certain time and location.

Special Olympics Washington Requirements for All Safety Components

Personal Protection Equipment (PPE)

- Special Olympics Washington will provide all registered teams with PPE kits. The kits will include:
 - Touchless Thermometer
 - Paper Masks
 - Anti-Fog Shields
 - Individual Pen Hand Sanitizer
 - Hand Sanitizer Wipes
 - Disposable Gloves
 - First Aid Kit
 - Electric Whistle (depending on sport)
 - RTA Venue Signage ([Downloadable](#))
 - Tape
 - RTA Forms ([Downloadable](#))
 - Box of Pens
 - Name Tags
- Athletes/Unified Partners/Coaches/and all Class A volunteers must complete both the COVID Waiver and Code of Conduct Risk Assessment Forms to participate in in-person practices/events. These forms only need to be submitted once and do not expire.
- All participants are encouraged to bring their own mask, water bottle and personal towel.
- Mask wearing and social distancing must be enforced. Those that don't comply will be dismissed and not allowed to participate.
- All athletes/partners/coaches/volunteers/ will have their temperature checked when they arrive at the practice/event session. Those with a fever (100.4 or higher) will be sent home. They also will be asked a series of health-related question when they enter facility/venue.

- Hand sanitizer will be made available, and all will be encouraged to use frequently.
- If required, coaches will submit contact tracing information to the respective Region Sports Manager within 24 hours of the completion of the practice/event.
- All participants will be notified by their coach if someone in the group contacted COVID-19. All future practices/events for that group will be cancelled for a minimum of 5 days.
- Special Olympics Washington will notify all proper health organizations of a potential COVID-19 outbreak.

Venue

- Work with your Region Sports Manager to secure a practice/event venue that will adhere to all RTA protocols.
- All facility contracts must be passed on to Special Olympics Washington. A staff member will work directly with American Specialty Insurance (on contract language and/or certificates of insurance) to be clear if we are expected to sanitize their venue or not.
- Coach must complete a venue walk-through prior to practice/activity to assess all necessary protocol, safety and activity modification needs.
- Ensure enough space is available at the venue for extra spacing for all sport and non-sport elements of activity (e.g., coach meetings, hydration and resting areas, skills and drills stations).
- Confirm if other entities/groups will be using the venue at the same time as Special Olympics. If so, it is recommended to stay clear from any other non-Special Olympics group.
- No use of locker rooms for anything other than restrooms for the spring season. All participants should dress at home for the training session/event.

Event Signage and Notices

- Special Olympics Washington will ensure all venue signage is available for download.
- Signage will use both language-based notices and pictures/icons for those who have difficulty reading.
- Signs must be posted in highly visible locations (e.g., at entrances and exits, and in restrooms)
- Signage will promote protective measures and describe how to stop the spread of germs. Signage examples include:
 - Do not enter if you are exhibiting any signs of illness such as sneezing, coughing, sniffles, have a fever, or don't feel well.
 - If you are repeatedly sneezing or coughing, you may be asked to immediately leave the premises.
 - All athletes, staff, volunteers, and spectators should practice responsible social distancing by remaining at least 6 ft apart whenever possible.
 - All athletes, staff, volunteers, and spectators should always wear PPE such as face masks.
 - Wash your hands and/or use hand sanitizer upon entrance, during the event, before and after you eat, and as you leave.
 - Avoid touching your face including your eyes, nose, and mouth.

- Broadcast regular announcements on public announcement (PA) system (if applicable).

Transportation/Arrivals/Departures

- Schedule staggered participant pick up/drop off times.
- Increase the amount of time between practices and competitions to allow for one group to depart before another group enters the facility. This also allows for more time to clean the facility between uses.
- Try to avoid entering venue (more applicable for indoor venues) at same time as athletes – attempt to reduce human bottlenecks/proximity in and out of venue.
- Athletes and Unified partners: arrive already dressed and sport ready.
- Establish procedures for safely transporting anyone who is sick to their home or to a healthcare facility. If you call an ambulance or bring someone to the hospital, call first to alert them that the person may have COVID-19 and notify their family or caregiver.

Housing

- Teams requiring housing will need to work directly with your Region Manger. If housing is approved, rooms cannot exceed (2) two individuals per double-queen room, and (1) one individual per single-queen/king room. Numbers may be increased per room if all are from the same household.

Staff/Volunteers/Coaches/Officials

- Ensure there are enough personnel available, trained and comfortable with the protocols to meet athlete ratio needs and conduct safe activities. Have go/no-go plan if not enough qualified personnel available.
- Have back-up staffing plan for coaches, volunteers and officials: cross-train staff and create a roster of trained back-up personnel.
- Extensive training sessions will be offered for staff, coaches, and volunteers prior to the start of the season.
- During a practice session, assistant coaches and chaperones should concentrate on sanitizing, cleaning, and enforcing athlete social distancing and safety behavior compliance so the head coach can coach.
- Coaches and volunteers will perform participant screenings, and on-site observation for symptoms.
- Coaches have the authority to send someone home from a practice or event if they do not meet the screening requirements or do not adhere to the participant agreement terms.
- The safety of our coaches and volunteers is our utmost concern. At any time, if coaches feel uncomfortable coaching under these circumstances, it is completely acceptable and understandable.
- Coaches, volunteers and officials must socially distance at all times!

Equipment

- All equipment must be cleaned and sanitized before practice session.
- Coach keeps all equipment / equipment bag in between practices and sanitizes at the start of every practice.
- Equipment/gear for each person (their own or provided): put athlete or partner's

name on it with tape or other means.

- Be aware of any damaging effects from frequent use of some sanitizing products may have on certain forms of gear or equipment.

Spectators / Family Members / Caregivers:

- Consult the Return to Activities Protocol for guidance for each risk level, but in general, **make best efforts to reduce the number of non-essential personnel at practices/events.**
- Family members / caregivers may need to drop off and pick-up only or stay in car during practice / activity.
- Have separate or staggered screening area or time for spectators / family members / caregivers.
- Based on the risk level your program/event falls in to, spectators either should or should not be encouraged to social distance if they sit in stands. Program / volunteers may need to mark off minimum distances in stands or on the ground to create clear seating areas.

Sport: Practices and Competitions

- Split squads/practices if you have enough venue availability and volunteers.
- **Consider having no spectators at practices and/or events.**
- Use physical guidance (ropes, tape on floor, chalked areas, coning-off areas) to help ensure social distancing.
- Break athletes into small groups that stay together and do not co-mingle. Keep players together in small groups with dedicated coaches or staff, and make sure that each group of players and coaches avoid mixing with other groups as much as possible. Teams might consider having the same group of athletes stay with the same coach or having the same group of athletes rotate among coaches.
- Put out cones or chalk ground to ensure social distancing for each player to have personal area for static stretching. Similarly, designated lanes could be set up for any dynamic stretches or running warm up. Mark off areas along bench, ground, fence or other stationary point of reference with tape/chalk/cones/surveyor's tape to give each athlete same spot for gear, rest, when not active at practice every week for consistency.
- Modify practices, skills, drills, and scrimmages, to limit the time athletes and partners spend physically close to others.
- During times when players are not actively participating in practice or competition, attention should be given to maintaining social distancing by increasing space between players on the sideline, dugout, or bench. Additionally, coaches can encourage athletes to use downtime for individual skill-building work or cardiovascular conditioning, rather than staying clustered together.

Support Coping and Resilience:

- Encourage participants to take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media if they are feeling overwhelmed or distressed.
- Promote healthy eating, exercising, getting sleep, and finding time to unwind.
- Encourage participants to talk with people they trust about their concerns and how they are feeling.

- Many participants are going through challenging times. Some may have lost loved ones, lost jobs, been disconnected from friends and school and haven't had the structure they are accustomed to. This creates a lot of stress that can show up in different ways. You can help reduce this stress through your communication approach. Special Olympics has shared the [Bridges Model](#), ([more on Bridges](#)) which have some helpful insights on leadership in times of crisis. The CDC also has some helpful useful resources regarding talking with youth, which include: [Helping Children Cope](#) and [Talking with Children](#). [Helping Athletes Cope with Covid](#) was published by NCYS.
- Support athlete by sharing and referencing Special Olympics Washington's [Strong Minds Workbook and Mental Health Resources](#).

COVID-19 Vaccine Information and Resources

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic began, people with intellectual disabilities (ID) faced disparities in health care systems. Across the board, people with ID are disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in health care, especially in terms of access to the COVID-19 vaccine.

- People with ID already die 16-20 years earlier than the general population due to preventable illness.
- People with ID are almost 6x more likely to die from COVID-19.
- People with ID who live in congregate settings are dying at even higher rates due to COVID-19 because of challenges with social distancing.

The health and safety of the Special Olympics Washington community, including our athletes, coaches, volunteers, and employees, are our top priority. As Special Olympics Washington makes a measured and methodical return to activities, we will continue to follow guidance from national and local authorities. We will continue to require social distancing, face coverings, and promote healthy hygiene and sanitation.

Special Olympics strongly encourages everyone who is able to get the COVID-19 vaccine, to be vaccinated. At this time, it is not a requirement for Special Olympics athletes, volunteers, and staff to be vaccinated to participate in programs, however, being vaccinated will help protect you from getting COVID-19, prevent serious illness, and may also help protect people around you.

Vaccines are one of the tools available to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. Special Olympics Washington is dedicated to providing you with the latest information and resources to protect our communities. We encourage everyone who has access to the COVID-19 vaccine to get vaccinated.

What you need to know about the COVID-19 Vaccine ([Poster](#))

Vaccine Myths vs. Fact ([Infographic](#))

The COVID-19 vaccine is available to all people 5 years and older who live or work in Washington State.

- Use the [Vaccine Locator](#) to find a location near you.
- Schedule your appointment and follow any clinic instructions.

Do you work at a school or childcare facility?

- Find Federal Retail Pharmacy Program locations through the [National Vaccine Finder](#).

Need help? Call the Washington State Department of Health:

- Call the COVID-19 hotline at 1-800-525-0127, then press #. Language assistance is available.

What to Do: Confirmed Positive COVID-19 Case

Should a confirmed or potential COVID-19 case arise at a Special Olympics Washington event, the head coach or lead of that event must immediately contact their Special Olympics Washington region manager, or staff point of contact to notify them of the situation. If there is no response, then contact Stephen Opland, Director of Competition and Operations at 206-681-9370. Staff will direct on any further steps needing to be followed.

If confirmed at practice, but before participating

- 1) Immediately isolate the infected individual and arrange for them to be sent home as soon as possible.
- 2) If said individual did not come in contact with anyone else at practice, then practice may proceed.
- 3) Should no further cases arise within the team, future practices may proceed as scheduled.
- 4) Individuals who test positive are required to isolate for (5) five days, strictly wear a mask for an additional (5) five days and present a negative COVID test before being allowed to resume in-person participation.

If confirmed onsite after individual has come in contact with others at practice

- 1) Immediately isolate the infected individual and arrange for them to be sent home as soon as possible.
- 2) Practice must immediately be stopped, and all individuals sent home.
- 3) Head Coach must inform the entire team of situation within (2) two hours of becoming aware.
- 4) Practices may not resume for a minimum of (5) five days from the last positive COVID test result.
- 5) All individuals who were at the affected practice should quarantine and monitor their symptoms. If no symptoms arise within (5) five days of being in contact, they may resume practices without providing a negative COVID test.
- 6) Individuals who test positive are required to isolate for (5) five days, strictly wear a mask for an additional (5) five days and present a negative COVID test before being allowed to resume in-person participation.

If confirmed within 48 hours after practice

- 1) Practices may not resume for a minimum of (5) five days from the last positive COVID test result.
- 2) Head Coach must inform the entire team of situation within (2) two hours of becoming aware.
- 3) All individuals who were at the affected practice should quarantine and monitor their symptoms. If no symptoms arise within (5) five days of being in contact, they may resume practices without providing a negative COVID test.
- 4) Individuals who test positive are required to isolate for (5) five days, strictly wear a mask for an additional (5) five days and present a negative COVID test before being allowed to resume in-person participation.

Isolation is what you do if you have COVID-19 symptoms, are awaiting test results, or have tested positive for COVID-19. Isolation means you stay home and away from others (including household members) for the recommended period of time to avoid spreading illness.

Quarantine is what you do if you have been exposed to COVID-19. Quarantine means you stay home and away from others for the recommended period of time in case you are infected and are contagious. Quarantine becomes isolation if you later test positive for COVID-19 or develop COVID-19 symptoms.

If you have been exposed to COVID-19, or think you have been exposed, you can help prevent the spread of the virus to others in your home and community. Please follow the [guidance](#) by the Washington State Department of Health.

(FAQs) Frequently Asked Questions

The following FAQs may be viewed on the Special Olympics Washington Return to Activities [website](#):

- COVID-19 Vaccine and Screening Protocols
- Spring Season Risk Levels and Timeline
- Sports and Registration
- Coaches Training
- Sports Specific and On-Site Screening

If you have further questions, please feel free to email us at rta@sowa.org.

Risk Assessment and Risk Mitigation: Functional Area Considerations

Until COVID-19 is either eradicated, or a cure is found, there is no way of completely eliminating the risk of infection, especially since many within the Special Olympics movement (with and without intellectual disabilities) are at greater risk for complications from COVID-19.



To help assess risk in returning to large-scale, mass gathering activities, consider using the WHO Risk Assessment Tool to determine the organizational risk of spread.

Sport

Each sport will present a varying level of risk as well and determination of what modifications are feasible should be considered by Special Olympics Washington. However, if precautions and mitigating criteria (e.g. PPE, physical distancing, no shared equipment and/or disinfection, staggered starts, etc.) can be implemented, then most sports may be offered in some capacity (e.g. individual skills or drills or small internal scrimmage) during all levels of return. Many local, national and international sport associations have begun to offer guidance on how to safely return to play within their sport with mitigation. It is recommended that, in addition to the minimum precautions detailed within this document, Programs adhere to sport-specific precautions and mitigation in determining how to resume sport activities and guidance from sport authorities and associations.

Schools

Programs should follow the school's protocols and guidance on when and how activities may resume. If school activities transition into Special Olympics Washington community activities (e.g., the final competition/tournament is hosted by Special Olympics Washington), then proper return to activities 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 Washington, the following guidance applies: The school/partner leaders/authorities should be informed of the Special Olympics Washington guidelines for determining return to activities.

- 1) The possibility of high-risk conditions in populations within the movement is conveyed to leaders/authorities.
- 2) Decision-making and options are provided to students with and without ID to provide for equal treatment.
- 3) Parents, guardians, or other caregivers of youth participants are provided with education on Special Olympics Washington guidelines and relevant acknowledgements.
- 4) 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.

In-Person Fundraising Events and Activities Protocols

In person fundraising events and activities will be permitted within a limited, pre-approved structure which differs from the general sports Return to Activity. These events will be broken down into two categories:

- Third-party events
- Co-operated activities or events hosted by an Area, team or LETR agency in coordination with Special Olympics Washington

For a definition and specific expectations of each of these please follow this [link](#) for the In-Person Fundraising Event Decision Tree.

Please note that third party events are fully run and supported outside of Special Olympics Washington. Although Special Olympics Washington will have no fiducial responsibility or be involved in the planning of the event, we will provide a list of [best practices](#) and will need to pre-approve any logos usages.

All co-operated events (including Area, team or LETR) will be required to submit a request and have approval before they begin to market any in-person activity. Link to register an event [here](#). Guidelines and protocols for your fundraiser will be reviewed with you upon approval.

Keeping our athletes safe remains our number one priority. If an athlete wishes to participate in a fundraising event as a paying entrant/registrant, like any other supporter, they are welcome to but would need to assume all liability for their own health and safety, as would all other event participants/members of the public.

If an athlete is requested for a specific role such as a speaker at the event, this will need to be pre-approved by Special Olympics Washington and included as part of the fundraising event and activity application process [here](#).

Healthy Athletes Protocols

Because of the nature of Healthy Athlete screening events -- which are often conducted indoors; may require close contact with decreased opportunity for physical distancing; and some interactions may be high risk without proper PPE and precautions in place -- programs should not resume Healthy Athlete screenings in person until Low Risk and only with limited numbers and for select disciplines. Additional guidance will be forthcoming on safety precautions for returning to in-person Healthy Athlete events. Virtual health programming and education should be offered throughout all levels. Email healthyathletes@sowa.org if you are interested in hosting a local Healthy Athletes screening.

Wellness & Fitness Programs Protocols

Fitness & Wellness programs can be facilitated in-person in Washington State following the requirements outlined in the Return to Activities plan, as well as the specific requirements below. Any program not following the Special Olympics Washington or specific guidelines will be asked to stop immediately.

Requirements

- 1) Masks **required** for ALL participants, at all times.
- 2) Verbal confirmation of no symptoms for all participants, as well as onsite temperature checks required.
- 3) Wellness coordinators, coaches or volunteers facilitating the program are required to keep an updated roster and track attendance for each session should a COVID case arise.
- 4) All participants (athletes and volunteers) must be listed on the team's approved roster and have signed COVID-19 Code of Conduct and Waiver form.
- 5) Only personal snacks and drinks allowed. No sharing of food.

Social Distancing

- 1) Groups are encouraged to meet outdoors if weather permits. If necessary, groups can meet indoors in a venue that allows for social distancing of 6 feet between participants.
- 2) Groups outside of an organized practice in any sport offered indicated above should be no more than 15 people.

Equipment

- 1) Participants should bring their own paper and writing utensils for notes.
- 2) Shared fitness equipment and workbooks should be sanitized between use.

Food & Beverages

- 1) No self-serve buffet meals, snacks or water stations.
- 2) Participants bring own water bottles.

Athlete Leadership Councils Protocols

Athlete Leadership Councils can resume in-person meetings in Washington State for the 2022 winter season following all requirements outlined in this guide. Any council wishing to meet in-person must meet with Athlete Leadership and Advocacy Manager, Leah Shaffner (lshaffner@sowa.org), prior to starting.

- 1) Face masks must be worn by all participants, regardless of vaccination status.
- 2) Verbal confirmation of no symptoms for all participants, as well as onsite temperature checks required.
- 3) Only personal snacks and drinks allowed. No sharing of food.
- 4) Council Advisors are required to keep an updated roster and track attendance for each meeting.
- 5) All participants (athletes and volunteers) must be listed on the team's approved roster and have signed COVID-19 Code of Conduct and Waiver forms.
- 6) Councils are encouraged to meet outdoors if weather permits. If necessary, groups can meet indoors in a venue that allows for social distancing of 6 feet between participants.
- 7) Groups should be no more than 15 people.

Special Olympics Washington COVID-19 Safety Agreement

Special Olympics Washington's top priority is the safety and health of all constituents and ensuring the opportunities we provide are offered in the safest manner possible. During the COVID-19 pandemic, additional measures and protocols have been implemented to guide us through these challenging times.

Though we will make every effort to continue with in-person participation, Special Olympics Washington will continue to follow local health authorities, Washington State Department of Health and CDC's guidance to assess the safety of in-person activities.

Should Special Olympics Washington be notified that it is no longer safe to proceed in-person, staff will work directly with local volunteers, partners, and facilities on a clear communication plan and steps to take moving forward. Special Olympics Washington will also send a mass notification to all constituents within 48 hours of being notified.

Questions?

For questions regarding Special Olympics Washington's Safe Return to Activity Protocol, please send e-mail to: rta@sowa.org

General Resources for All:

- New Athlete Registration Form
- Vaccine Myths vs. Facts
- COVID-19 FAQ page
- COVID-19 Participant Code of Conduct
- COVID-19 Participant Code of Conduct Explainer Video
- COVID-19 Waiver Form
- COVID-19 Vaccine - What you need to know
- COVID-19 Resource Page - Center for Disease Control & Prevention
- COVID-19 Vaccine – Washington State Department of Health
- COVID-19 Testing – Washington State Department of Health
- COVID-19 – Identifying High Risk Participants
- How to Wear a Face Mask
- Strong Minds Workbook & Mental Health Resource Guide
- Competition Dates

Coaches Resources

- Spring Season Registration Packet
- COVID-19 Participant Code of Conduct
- COVID-19 Participant Code of Conduct Explainer Video
- Preparing the Venue Video
- COVID-19 Training-in-a-safe-environment
- Travel to Activity and Onsite Screening Video
- Coaching Adjustments Video
- View Coaches Training Dates
- Register for Coaches Training
- Competition Dates

Access our Return to Activities Webpage



Volunteers Resources:

- Volunteer Description & Instructions
- Sign up to be a Volunteer
- Training time/dates
- Training Recordings
- Competition Dates