



***Special
Olympics***
Washington

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

Fall 2021

Current as of 08/17/21

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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.

Information on COVID-19 is changing daily. Transmission rates vary across the countries in which Special Olympics Washington operates. 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 movement to continually monitor this ever-changing situation and adjust decision-making accordingly while adhering to the guidance contained herein.

Stephen Opland, Director of Sports and Competition, 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@sowa.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.

This document and its contents are current as of 08/17/2021.

Guiding Principles

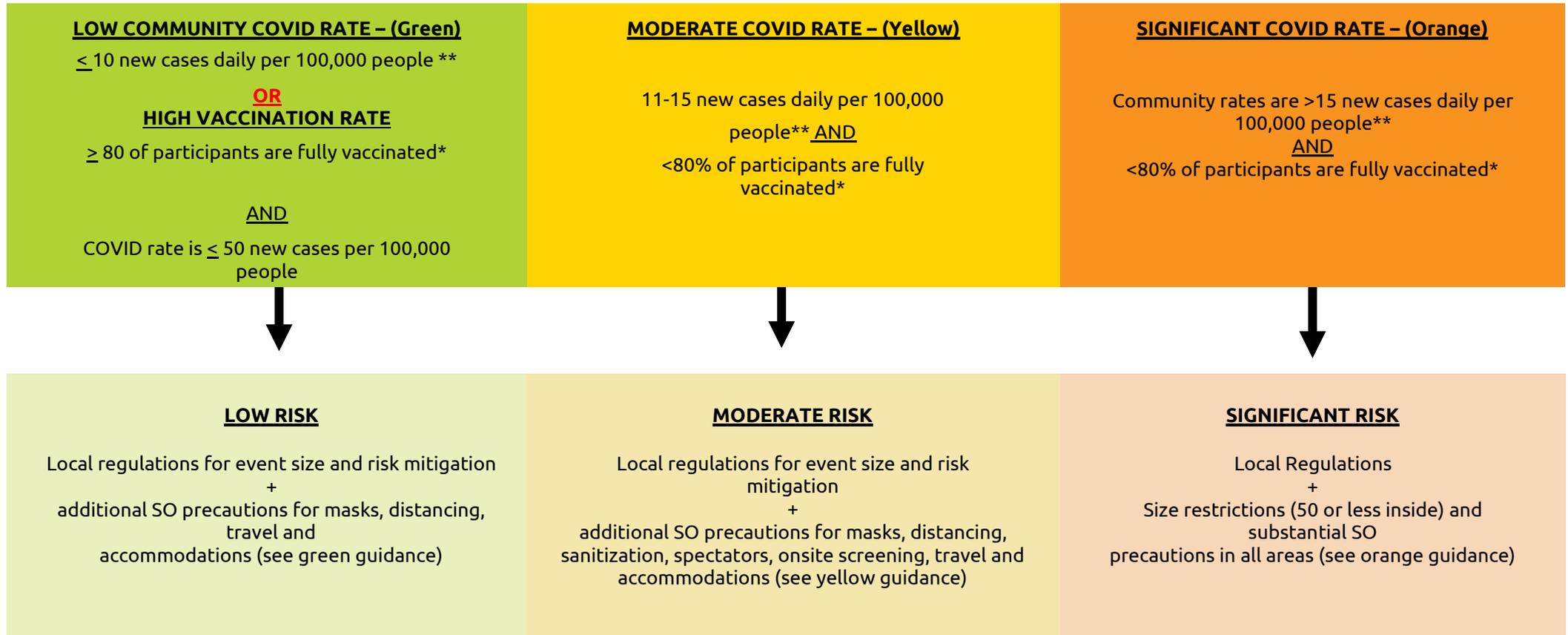
1. The health and safety of all members of the Special Olympics movement is paramount.
2. Beyond a sports organization, Special Olympics is a movement for and by people with intellectual disabilities (ID), and its guidance must be inclusive and directed at the unique needs and abilities of people with 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.
- **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.

2021 Fall 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 new protocols.

For the 2021 Fall 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	Flag Football, Volleyball, Gymnastics, Bowling Stagger start times to reduce crowding at the event.
Forms	Athletes, coaches, Unified partners, officials, volunteers, and staff complete the COVID Code of Conduct & Waiver form.
Onsite Screening	Verbal confirmation of no symptoms for all participants and spectators + onsite temperature checks on arrival (each day, if multiple days). Signage on preventive measures (handwashing, distancing and masking) and education on symptoms and reminder to stay home if sick or any symptoms.
Positive COVID test or previous COVID disease	No participation within 10 days of COVID positive test and 7 days of any symptoms. Athletes and Unified partners must receive medical clearance prior to participating in sport. Programs must educate on this requirement.

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

Young Athletes	<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	<p>Follow size restrictions, venue options and risk mitigation guidance per above.</p> <p>See additional HA guidance on page 22 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 22 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 23 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.**

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 7 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.

Sports Offered by Special Olympics Washington for the Fall Season

After reviewing the [Sports Risk Assessment](#) from SOI, Special Olympics Washington will be providing the below sports for this Fall 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 Fall season.

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

- Flag Football
- Volleyball
- Gymnastics
- Bowling
- Fit 5
- SONA Move Challenge (*Virtual or in-person program*)
- Unified Robotics(*Schools*)
- Unified Fitness Clubs(*Schools*)

*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.

Timeline for Fall Season

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| • SONA Move Challenge Registration Opens | 08/01/21 |
| • Pre-Season Registration Opens | 08/16/21 |
| • Fall Season Town Hall Meeting #1 @ 4:30 pm-5:30 pm | 08/25/21 |
| • Fall Season Town Hall Meeting #2 @ 10:00 am-11:00 am | 08/28/21 |
| • Pre-Season Registration Closes | 09/06/21 |
| • SONA Move Challenge Registration Closes | 09/06/21 |
| • Bowling/Gymnastics Coaches Training @ 5:00 pm-6:00 pm | 09/07/21 |
| • Flag Football/Volleyball Coaches Training @ 5:00 pm-6:00 pm | 09/09/21 |
| • SONA Move Challenge Starts | 09/13/21 |
| • Fall Season Starts | 09/20/21 |
| • Leadership Conference | 09/25/21 |
| • Final Registration Opens | 09/27/21 |
| • Final Registration Closes | 10/12/21 |
| • Regional Competitions Start | 10/30/21 |
| • Fall Season Concludes | 11/21/21 |

Flag Football Protocols

In-person flag football 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) Masks **required** for ALL participants, at all times, except during play on the field. 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) Participants are required to go straight to their field after checking in. Upon completion of their practice/game they must leave the premises as quickly as possible.
- 5) Coaches are required to keep an updated roster and track attendance for each practice should a COVID case arise.
- 6) Volunteers/coaches who are assisting the team must have all the required credentials (*WSP Background check, Protective Behaviors, and Fall season RTA Protocols Training Video*), listed on the team's approved roster, and clearly identified with a name tag or some form of clothing.
- 7) Team roster may not exceed (12) twelve players with (3) three coaches/chaperones.
- 8) 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 regulation size flag football field at a time for practice.
- 2) No more than (35) thirty-five personnel (*2 x teams of 15 + 5 day of volunteers*) on a Special Olympics regulation size flag football 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) Footballs must be cleaned with a disinfectant cleaner or wipe before and after practice; before each game for Team competition play; and n-between each player for Individual skills competition.
- 2) Team benches/seats must be cleaned with a disinfectant cleaner or wipe before practice; before a game for Team competition play; and before play for Individual skills competition.
- 3) All stop watches, clipboard, pens, cones, measuring tapes, etc. must be cleaned with a disinfectant cleaner or wipe before practice; before a game for Team competition play; and before play for Individual skills competition.
- 4) All participants must have and use their own water bottle.

Volleyball Protocols

In-person volleyball 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) Masks **required** for ALL participants, at all times, except during play on the court. 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) Participants are required to go straight to their court after checking in. Upon completion of their practice/game they must leave the premises as quickly as possible.
- 5) Coaches are required to keep an updated roster and track attendance for each practice should a COVID case arise.
- 6) Volunteers/coaches who are assisting the team must have all the required credentials (*WSP Background check, Protective Behaviors, and Fall season RTA Protocols Training Video*), listed on the team's approved roster, and clearly identified with a name tag or some form of clothing.
- 7) Team roster may not exceed (12) twelve players with (3) three coaches/chaperones.
- 8) 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 regulation size volleyball court at a time for practice.
- 2) No more than (35) thirty-five personnel (*2 x teams of 15 + 5 day of volunteers*) on a Special Olympics regulation size volleyball court 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) Volleyballs must be cleaned with a disinfectant cleaner or wipe before and after practice; before each set and match for Team competition play; in-between each player for Individual skills competition.
- 2) Team benches/seats must be cleaned with a disinfectant cleaner or wipe before practice; before a match for Team competition play; before play for Individual skills competition.
- 3) All stop watches, clipboard, pens, cones, measuring tapes, etc. must be cleaned with a disinfectant cleaner or wipe before practice; before a match for Team competition play; before play for Individual skills competition.
- 4) All participants must have and use their own water bottle.

Bowling Protocols

In-person bowling 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 always worn by all participants. This includes during play.
- 2) Verbal confirmation of no symptoms for all participants and spectators, as well as onsite temperature checks required.
- 3) Participants are required to go straight to their lanes upon checking in and not mingle in the commons area. Upon completion of their game(s) they must leave the premises as quickly as possible.
- 4) All participants must use hand sanitizer, or thoroughly wash their hands prior to, and after play.
- 5) Coaches are required to keep an updated roster and track attendance for each practice should a COVID case arise.
- 6) Competition format may be implemented at the discretion of the Head Coach. (i.e lanes 1 & 2 switch after each frame.)
- 7) Volunteers/coaches who are assisting the team must have all the required credentials (*WSP Background check, Protective Behaviors, and Fall season RTA Protocols Training Video*), listed on the team's approved roster, and clearly identified with a name tag or some form of clothing.
- 8) All participants must use their own water bottle. No sharing of food or drinks.

Social Distancing

- 1) No more than (4) four participants on a lane per game. This may consist of (4) four athletes, or (2) two athletes and (2) two unified partners.
- 2) If multiple shifts are required to accommodate a large roster, then shifts must allow for a minimum of 30 minutes in-between for proper screening and to ensure as much social distancing as possible. *Coaches must track which participants are in which shift.*
- 3) Spectators/family members are not allowed onto the bowling lanes or settee area.
- 4) Volunteers/coaches may not exceed the 4:1 athlete-to-coach ratio while on the bowling lanes or settee area. This means, no more than (1) one volunteer/coach per lane. Assisted ramp bowlers may have up to (2) two volunteers/coaches per lane.

Equipment

- 1) Only (1) one ramp is allowed per lane for bowling ramp events. Ramps must be cleaned with a disinfectant cleaner or wiped every (3) three frames, or between each bowler, whichever is more frequent.
- 2) To the best of your abilities, bowlers should not share a bowling ball during a game. If sharing a ball is required, the ball must be cleaned with a disinfectant cleaner or wipe before changing hands.

Gymnastics Protocols

In-person gymnastics 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) Masks **required** for ALL participants, at all times, except while practicing or performing a routine. Coaches, volunteers, and family members required to wear a mask at all times.
- 2) Verbal confirmation of no symptoms for all participants and spectators, as well as onsite temperature checks required.
- 3) Coaches are required to keep an updated roster and track attendance for each practice should a COVID case arise.
- 4) All participants must use hand sanitizer, or thoroughly wash their hands upon entering facility and before each rotation.
- 5) Volunteers/coaches who are assisting the team must have all the required credentials (*WSP Background check, Protective Behaviors, and Fall season RTA Protocols Training Video*), listed on the team's approved roster, and clearly identified with a name tag or some form of clothing.
- 6) Only personal snacks and drinks allowed. No sharing of food or using water fountains.

Social Distancing

- 1) Measure your gym, know the square footage and maximum occupancy, do the math, and create more space by removing items and equipment not being used, or limit the number of participants in each class to allow for physical distancing.
- 2) Create a map of your gym's space to show how each activity in the space may continue consistent with the 6-foot standard.
- 3) Per USA Gymnastics' Safe Sport Policy, a parent/guardian must be provided the opportunity to observe their child's training.
 - a. Programs/teams can establish the method by which the training is viewable to ensure that social distancing protocols are maintained. For example, consider:
 - Limit observation to one parent/family.
 - Establishing a closed circuit T.V. platform that would allow parents to watch from parking lot/home (example Spot T.V.).

Equipment

- 1) When possible, wipe equipment down after each person. If not possible, ensure that all equipment is properly sanitized before each class and/or each rotation.
- 2) Remove chalk bowls; participants should bring and use their own chalk, bucket and/or bag.
- 3) Remove mats or shapes that are torn from use as they cannot be properly sanitized.

*Refer to the [USA Gymnastics Safe Reopening Guidelines](#) for additional protocols to consider.

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
 - Sanitizer w/pump
 - Disposable Gloves
 - Individual First Aid Pouch
 - Electric Whistle (depending on sport)
 - RTA Signage
 - Tape
 - RTA Forms
 - Cinch Sacks
 - Binder w/ COVID-19 -RTA Plan
 - Box of Pens
- 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 RTA practices/events.
- 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 10 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 the fall season. All participants should dress at home for the training session/event.

Event Signage and Notices

- Special Olympics Washington will provide all signage needed in the PPE kits.
- Signage will use both language-based notices and pictures/icons for those who have difficulty reading.
- Signs must be posted 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 wear PPE such as face masks at all times.
 - 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.

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.
- Coaches will need to complete a sports specific training before they can conduct a practice session for the fall season.
 - The volunteer training will address why precautions are needed to protect all Special Olympics athletes, partners, coaches and volunteers.

- 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](#) - http://specialolympicswashington.org/wp-content/uploads/CB0001437-50-20_FINAL_SOWA-Mental-Health-Resource-Guide_ADA.pdf

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 12 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 child care 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: Positive COVID-19 Case at Event

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 Sports & Competition 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) Individual who tests positive is required to isolate for (10) ten days and present a negative COVID test before being allowed to resume 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 (10) ten 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 (10) ten days of being in contact, they may resume practices without providing a negative COVID test.
 - 6) Individual who tests positive is required to isolate for (10) ten days and present a negative COVID test before being allowed to resume participation.

- **If confirmed within 48 hours after practice**
 - 1) Practices may not resume for a minimum of (10) ten 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 (10) ten days of being in contact, they may resume practices without providing a negative COVID test.
 - 4) Individual who tests positive is required to isolate for (10) ten days and present a negative COVID test before being allowed to resume 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
- Fall 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:

1. The school/partner leaders/authorities should be informed of the Special Olympics Washington guidelines for determining return to activities.
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 Washington guidelines and relevant acknowledgements.
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.

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 return to in-person meetings in Washington State for the 2021 fall season following all requirements outlined in this guide. Any council wishing to meet in-person must meet with Initiatives 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 Mentors 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 waivers.
- 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

- Return to Activities Binder
- Fall 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