



As citizens, communities, and nations around the world resume operations and activities in the time of COVID-19, Special Olympics Maine has developed guidance on returning to activities. This guidance is founded on the latest medical information available and guidance from organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and nation-specific health agencies such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the U.S.

Throughout this document, “participants” are defined as all athletes, Unified partners, coaches, volunteers, family members, caregivers, staff or others in attendance of an activity.

Guidance on COVID-19 Return to Activities

Information on COVID-19 is changing daily and transmission rates vary across the counties in which Special Olympics Maine 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. **Local Programs MUST designate a COVID-19 response point-person to keep current with Phases and all compliance requirements, coordinate response and monitor for COVID-19. This may be the HOD, Head Coach or a designee.** Periodically Area or State calls may be convened with these individuals for monitoring.

These are intended as minimum guidelines for Special Olympics Maine as they consider returning to activities. **It is intended to supplement – not replace – any state/provincial, local, territorial/national or tribal health and safety laws, rules and regulations with which similar organizations must comply.**

Additionally, the information in this document is not intended or implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. The knowledge and circumstances around COVID-19 are changing constantly and, as such, Special Olympics Maine 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.

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 U.S. CDC guidelines should serve as minimum standards. In addition, consideration should be given to local and community authorities in that if there are more conservative/restrictive guidelines, these should be followed.
4. Guidance is based on current medical information available at the time of publication. As knowledge of COVID-19 is changing rapidly, guidance will continue to evolve.
5. Guidance takes a phased approach that is dependent on local transmission rates as well as testing/monitoring/contact tracing/health system capacity.

Phased Approach to Return to Activities

Special Olympics Maine is adopting a four (4) phased approach to return to activities. **It is important to note there may be times a community will revert to an earlier phase if and when the spread of infection rises in the future.**

Participation Risk Awareness and Acknowledgement

Prior to returning to any in-person Special Olympics activities in Phases 1 through 2, all participants are recommended to complete and return a *Participant Risk Acknowledgement Form* which provides information and guidance on assessing risk and acknowledges that participation could increase risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19.

If participants have tested positive and/or been diagnosed with COVID-19, the participant must provide written proof of clearance from their healthcare professional prior to returning to sport or fitness activities. **Local Program will ensure that all participants (e.g. athletes, unified partners, coaches, volunteers, staff, and families) are educated about those that are at higher risk of complications from COVID-19 as well as all procedures and expectations for return to activities.**

SPECIAL OLYMPICS MAINE RETURN TO ACTIVITIES PHASES				
Phase 0 Prevalence: community transmission occurring Stay at home order in place for all individuals.	Phase 1 Prevalence: clusters of cases occurring Stay at home order is lifted, restriction on size of gatherings (<10 people).	Phase 2 Prevalence: sporadic cases reported Size restrictions on gatherings increased to <50 people.	Phase 3 TO BE DETERMINED	Phase 4 TO BE DETERMINED
No events or activities of any sort to be held in person. Individual sport training sessions in own home using own equipment. Coaching occurs virtually. Meetings, conferences or trainings to be held virtually.	HIGH RISK INDIVIDUALS (see appendix) should continue to remain at home. PRACTICES, HEALTH/FITNESS, LEADERSHIP and LOCAL EVENTS (with less than 10 participants) MAY resume if they adhere to strict physical distancing and sanitation protocols. No direct or indirect contact (e.g. through a ball in the hand) should take place. Virtual programming should be made available for those not able to attend in person SCHOOL-based activities led by schools should comply with guidance from schools/districts.	HIGH RISK INDIVIDUALS (see appendix) should continue to remain at home. PRACTICES, HEALTH/FITNESS, LEADERSHIP and LOCAL EVENTS (with less than 50 participants), MAY resume if they adhere to physical distancing and sanitation protocols. Indirect contact (e.g. through a ball in the hand) MAY resume. No direct contact should occur in sports. Virtual programming should be made available for those not able to attend in person. SCHOOL-based activities led by schools should comply with guidance from schools/districts.		

Mitigating Criteria and Precautions by Phase

PHASE 0 – All Individuals Stay at Home

Prevalence: Community transmission occurring.

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

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

PHASE 1

Prevalence: Clusters of cases occurring

Size: Gatherings restricted to <10 people, individuals at high risk should remain safe at home

Phase 1 Comply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure compliance with all local and national regulations, including for participation of individuals at high risk.
Phase 1 Educate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Designate a COVID response point person for the activity. <input type="checkbox"/> Prior to attendance, educate all participants on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o High-risk conditions and the risks of participation. o Requirement that anyone who has symptoms must stay home and to contact their own health provider if they are sick for further evaluation. o Requirements for in-person gathering, including PPE, hygiene, and physical distancing. <input type="checkbox"/> Following this education (e.g. video or handouts), all participants should acknowledge receiving education and confirm understanding of risks and participation procedures by signing <i>Participant Risk Acknowledgement Form</i> (See Supplemental material).
Phase 1 Prepare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Have COVID screening protocol in place and coaches/staff/volunteers prepared to implement prior to or upon arrival at event (see additional guidance on screening protocol below). <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that the venue is disinfected or sanitized, especially bathrooms. <input type="checkbox"/> Highly recommend use of outdoor, well-ventilated facilities. Where possible instruct participants to use single entry point (to allow for screening process) and separate exit. <input type="checkbox"/> No shared supplies such as towels and water/beverage bottles. <input type="checkbox"/> Minimize shared equipment. Equipment should never be used by one participant and then another without disinfection between uses. If equipment is to be used by multiple people during the activity, prepare a cleaning protocol and supplies to disinfect equipment between uses. <input type="checkbox"/> Remind participants to bring PPE and, if used, their own water bottle, towel, and equipment. Have a facemasks/PPE available for those who are unable to bring. <input type="checkbox"/> Have reminders/signage posted that reinforces appropriate use of PPE relevant to the activity, hygiene and physical distancing. <input type="checkbox"/> Have hand sanitizer or handwashing facilities available at venue. <input type="checkbox"/> Know how to communicate potential cases to the local health authorities for testing and to the Special Olympics Accredited Program (within privacy laws). <input type="checkbox"/> Remind participants that during transport to activities, it is recommended that participants should wear a mask if on public transport, such as a bus, trolley, subway or if carpooling which includes someone not living with them. <input type="checkbox"/> If Special Olympics is providing transportation, participants must wear facemasks during travel.
Phase 1 Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> On arrival, conduct screening for ALL PARTICIPANTS (<i>see screening protocol below</i>). All participants with symptoms, a history of recent (last 14 days) COVID exposure, or temperature >100.4F/37.8C must not proceed to the activity <input type="checkbox"/> Continue to provide a safe participation option for those who are at high risk and thus unable to participate in person (e.g. virtual/training at home). <input type="checkbox"/> Activities must comply with distancing guidelines at all times. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o No activities that involve direct or indirect contact (e.g., through a ball in the hand) can occur. Consider spacing for drills, etc. using visual guides such as tape, chalk, cones, etc. o Maintain physical distancing and avoid close contact (e.g. high fives, hugs, huddles) during and after activity o Wear facemasks throughout the activity, except during exercise, including upon arrival and departure <input type="checkbox"/> Coaches and volunteers should minimize changes in personnel---groups should stay together and not change. <input type="checkbox"/> Program staff must provide reminders to participants on standard infection prevention measures (e.g. frequent handwashing, avoid touching face, cover mouth when sneezing/coughing, etc.) at the start and throughout event. <input type="checkbox"/> No Spectators should be allowed to congregate on the sidelines of activities. Individuals providing transportation for participants should remain in vehicles until sessions are over. If participants need assistance, caregivers may remain provided they also maintain distancing, hygiene and use PPE, including masks. <input type="checkbox"/> Maintain a list of all participants with contact details. This will allow for contact tracing should a participant be later diagnosed as having COVID-19 during the activity.

PHASE 2

Prevalence: Sporadic cases occurring

Size: Gatherings restricted to <50 people, individuals at high risk should remain safe at home

Phase 2 Comply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure compliance with all local and national restrictions, including for participation of high-risk individuals.
Phase 2 Educate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Designate a COVID response point person for the activity. <input type="checkbox"/> Prior to attendance, educate all participants on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o High-risk conditions and the risks of participation. o Requirement that anyone who has symptoms must stay home and to contact their own health provider if they are sick for further evaluation. o Requirements for in-person gathering, including PPE, hygiene, and physical distancing. <input type="checkbox"/> Following this education (e.g. video or handouts), all participants should acknowledge receiving education and confirm understanding of risks and participation procedures by signing <i>Participant Risk Acknowledgement Form</i> (See Supplemental material).
Phase 2 Prepare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Have COVID screening protocol in place and coaches/staff/volunteers prepared to implement prior to or upon arrival at event (see additional guidance on screening protocol below). <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that the venue is disinfected or sanitized, especially bathrooms. <input type="checkbox"/> No shared supplies such as towels and water/beverage bottles. <input type="checkbox"/> Minimize shared equipment. If shared equipment must be used, prepare a cleaning protocol and supplies to disinfect shared equipment between uses. <input type="checkbox"/> Remind participants to bring PPE and, if used, their own water bottle, towel, and equipment. Have facemasks/PPE available for those who are unable to bring. <input type="checkbox"/> Have reminders/signage posted that reinforces appropriate use of PPE relevant to the activity, hygiene and physical distancing. <input type="checkbox"/> Have hand sanitizer or handwashing facilities available at venue. <input type="checkbox"/> Know how to communicate potential cases to the local health authorities for testing and to the Special Olympics Accredited Program (within privacy laws). <input type="checkbox"/> Remind participants that during transport to activities, it is recommended that participants should wear a mask if on public transport, such as a bus, trolley, subway or if carpooling which includes someone not living with them. <p>If Special Olympics is providing transportation, participants must wear facemasks during travel.</p>
Phase 2 Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> On arrival, conduct screening for ALL PARTICIPANTS (see screening protocol below). All participants with symptoms, a history of recent (last 14 days) COVID exposure, or temperature > 100.4F/37.8C may not proceed to the activity <input type="checkbox"/> Activities must comply with distancing guidelines at all times. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Indirect contact (e.g., through a ball in the hand) MAY resume. Direct contact may NOT resume yet. o Maintain physical distancing and avoid close contact (e.g. high fives, hugs, huddles). o Wear facemasks throughout the activity, except during exercise, including upon arrival and departure <input type="checkbox"/> Coaches and volunteers should minimize changes in personnel--groups should stay together and not switch up if possible. <input type="checkbox"/> Program staff must provide reminders to participants on standard infection prevention measures (e.g. frequent handwashing, avoid touching face, cover mouth when sneezing/coughing, etc.) at the start and throughout event. <input type="checkbox"/> Participants may share equipment when circumstances require it (i.e. soccer ball on the field). If shared equipment must be used, prepare a cleaning protocol and supplies to disinfect shared equipment between uses. <input type="checkbox"/> Maintain a list of all participants with contact details. This will allow for contact tracing should a participant be later diagnosed as having COVID-19 during the activity.

PHASE 3 & 4 – TO BE DETERMINED

Special Olympics Maine will continue to work on developing the guidelines for Phases 3 and 4 after having an opportunity to see what is happening with the virus. It is difficult to predict what things will look like in August at this point.

Risk Assessment and Risk Mitigation: Functional Area Considerations

Until COVID-19 is either eradicated, a vaccine is developed, 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 Special Olympics Maine will determine what modifications are feasible. 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 phases 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, Local Programs adhere to sport-specific precautions and mitigation in determining how to resume sport activities and guidance from sport authorities and associations.

SCHOOLS

With regards to activities in schools, Local Programs should follow the school's protocols and guidance in terms of when and how activities may resume. If school activities transition into Special Olympics Maine community activities (e.g., the final competition/tournament is hosted by Special Olympics Maine), then proper return to play protocol and necessary precautions for Special Olympics Maine 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 Maine, the following guidance applies:

1. The school/partner leaders/authorities should be informed of the Special Olympics Maine guidelines for determining return to play.
2. The possibility of high-risk conditions in populations within the movement is conveyed to leaders/authorities.
3. Decision-making and options are provided to students with and without ID to provide for equal treatment.
4. Parents, guardians, or other caregivers of youth participants are provided with education on Special Olympics guidelines and relevant acknowledgements (e.g. video)
5. Youth participants involved in Special Olympics branded/sanctioned activities are given the option to opt out without penalty and are provided options for safe at home activities.

Onsite Screening Protocol for COVID-19

Regular education must be provided to all athletes, staff, volunteers, coaches, families and caregivers reminding them to stay home if they have a fever or any signs and symptoms (cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea). **Individuals must not participate in any activities if they are sick, for their own health and to reduce transmission of any infections to others.** Instruct anyone who is ill to contact their own health provider for further evaluation.

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

1. Must set-up a space for screening that maintains physical distance (6ft/2m) during screening.

2. Must ask the following questions (reinforced through visuals and verbally, such as a poster/paper with icons):
 - a. In the last 14 days, have you had contact with someone who has been sick with COVID-19?
 - b. Have you had a fever in the last week (temperature of 100.4°F/37.8°C or higher)?
 - c. Do you have a cough and/or difficulty breathing?
 - d. Do you have any other signs or symptoms of COVID-19 (fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea)?
3. Should conduct onsite measurement of temperature using thermometer (preferred non-touch thermal scanning thermometer if possible).
 - Fever equals temperature of 100.4°F/37.8°C or higher.
 - If high, may re-test after 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*).
 - a. If yes to any questions, participants MUST be isolated from the group (at minimum, kept 2m/6ft apart from others and with mask on), be sent home, and instructed to contact their healthcare provider for evaluation.
 - b. Participants who are found to have COVID-19 symptoms must wait 7 days after symptoms resolve to return to activity OR must provide written proof of physician clearance to Special Olympics to return earlier.
 - c. Participants who test positive for/have COVID-19 must provide written medical clearance before returning to sport and fitness activities.

Questions?

Contact Special Olympics Maine State Office: 207-879-0489 or info@somaine.org

Appendix

Additional materials available in supplemental documentation:

- a. [SOMaine Local Program COVID 19 Point of Contact Form](#)
- b. [SOMaine Participant Risk Assessment and COVID-19 Code of Conduct Form](#)
- c. [Screening and Tracking Report Form Template](#)
- d. [Virtual Games Participation Waiver \(for non-registered athletes\)](#)
- e. [Who is at High Risk of COVID 19?](#)
- f. [How to become a properly registered participant of Special Olympics Maine?](#)
- g. [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- h. Training and education materials for participants and coaches
 - [Summary of the Return to Activities Protocol](#) (video)
 - [COVID 19 Participant Code of Conduct & Risk Assessment Form](#) (video)
 - [COVID 19 Education, Prevention & Safety](#) (video)
 - [Preparing the Venue](#) (video)
 - [Travel to Activity & Onsite Screening](#) (video)
 - [Examples of Coaching Adjustments](#) (video)
 - [Sample educational signage on precautions and COVID-19 symptoms](#) (PDF)
 - [Training in a safe environment](#) (PDF)

As developed, resources will continue to be added to the Special Olympics Resources website for COVID-19:
<https://resources.specialolympics.org/resources-to-help-during-the-crisis/return-to-activities-during-covid-19>