



# SPECIAL OLYMPICS PENNSYLVANIA

Return to Activities  
Updated: 3/22/22

NORTHAMPTON  
COUNTY

SPECIAL  
OLYMPICS  
PENNSYLVANIA

**Special  
Olympics**  
Pennsylvania



**Special Olympics Pennsylvania  
Return to Activities Plan**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS:**

- Guiding Principles.....Page 2
- Summary.....Page 3
- Matrix.....Page 4
- Operating Protocols.....Pages 5-7
- Requirements.....Pages 8-9
- Approval Process.....Page 10
- Travel/Transportation.....Page 10-11
- Appendix.....Page 12

Special Olympics Pennsylvania (SOPA), has developed the following Return to Activities plan in response to COVID-19 which prioritizes the health and safety of everyone involved.

The plan aligns with guidance set forth by the State of Pennsylvania, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and Special Olympics International (SOI).

**Throughout this document “participants” are defined as all Athletes, Unified Partners, Coaches, Officials, Volunteers, HODs, SO Staff, and families/caregivers if they will not exclusively be in spectator-only spaces.**

**GUIDING PRINCIPLES:**

- The health and safety of all members of the Special Olympics movement is paramount.
- 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.
- Relevant State of Pennsylvania, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and Special Olympics International (SOI) guidelines 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.
- 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.
- Guidance is dependent on local transmission rates, vaccination rates as well as testing/monitoring/contact tracing/health system capacity.

**SUMMARY:**

- All SOPA Local Programs inclusive of sport training, competition, meetings, social gatherings and Young Athletes are required to follow all of the guidance and requirements in the SOPA Return to Activities plan.
- As per the State of Pennsylvania and SOI's requirements, SOPA must designate a COVID-19 Coordinator to keep current with phases and all compliance requirements, coordinate response, and monitor for COVID-19.
- Each site must have a designated COVID-19 Coordinator. This individual will receive training resources from SOPA.
- Special Olympics Pennsylvania is monitoring COVID-19 new cases daily per 100,000 people on a rolling 7-day average through the Pennsylvania Department of Health. A 7-day moving average, takes the case rates per 100,000 people for the last 7 days, adds them up, and divides it by 7. There are multiple "operating protocols" found in the matrix. Where your community transmission and vaccination rates intersect determines your operating protocol.
  - The SOPA Field Director will email Local Program Managers and COVID-19 Coordinators on a weekly basis with the COVID-19 community transmission rates (low, moderate or significant) of each county as well as an abbreviated version of the Return to Activities plan which includes the mitigation protocols.
  - The COVID-19 Coordinator is expected to implement the required mitigation protocols weekly depending on the COVID-19 community transmission rate (low, moderate or significant).

**MATRIX:**

		Community Transmission Rate (daily new cases per 100k/7-day average)*				
		0-10	11-50	51-99	100-199	>=200
Vaccination Rate +	100%	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Orange
	80-99%	Blue	Blue	Yellow	Orange	Red
	50-79%	Blue	Yellow	Orange	Orange	Red
	<50%	Yellow	Orange	Red	Red	Red

<p><b><u>Mask recommended</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Overnight events allowed without additional protocols</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Spectators separated from athletes as much as possible</u></b></p>	<p><b><u>Mask recommended</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Overnight events allowed, testing for unvaccinated participants required pre-event and periodically during the event depending on duration</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Spectators separated from athletes as much as possible</u></b></p>	<p><b><u>Mask required indoors, recommended outdoors when not able to physically distance</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Overnight events allowed, testing for unvaccinated participants required pre-event and periodically during the event depending on duration</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Spectators must be separated from athletes</u></b></p>	<p><b><u>Mask required</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Overnight events not allowed</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Spectators must be separated from athletes</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Activity - Individual sports and indirect contact sports only</u></b></p>	<p><b><u>Groups of 10 or less: participants can gather under orange protocol</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Groups larger than 10 participants: all activities must be virtual</u></b></p>
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\* Community Transmission Rate is determined using:

- For Local Program trainings/competitions: The rate where the Local Program is based or where the event is being held, whichever is higher.
- For multi-program, Regional & State events: The higher of the state-wide rate or the rate where the event is being held.

+Vaccination Rate is determined by calculating percentage of total number of participants (Athletes, Unified Partners, Coaches, Officials, Volunteers, HODs, SO Staff, and families/caregivers if they will not exclusively be in spectator-only spaces) at an event or activity who are fully vaccinated (2 series shot of Moderna or Pfizer OR 1 shot of Johnson & Johnson).

Groups of 10 or less: participants can gather under orange protocol.

Groups larger than 10 participants: all activities must be virtual.

## OPERATING PROTOCOLS:

Operating Protocols	Green	Blue	Yellow	Orange
<b>Event Size and Venue</b>	Size and venue per local authority regulations.	Size and venue per local authority regulations.	Size and venue per local authority regulations.	Outdoors: Size per local authority regulations. Indoors or Mixed Indoors/Outdoors: < 100 participants.
<b>Type of sport/activity</b>	Per local authority regulations.	Per local authority regulations.	Per local authority regulations. Stagger start times to reduce crowding at the event.	Per local authority regulations. <b>Individual sports and indirect contact sports only.</b> For non-sport (e.g., leadership trainings, meetings, etc.): Maintain physical distancing and minimize direct contact.
<b>Sanitization</b> <i>Consistent in all protocols</i>	Sanitization protocol for all communal shared areas and frequently touched surfaces.			
<b>Forms</b> <i>Consistent in all protocols</i>	All participants complete the COMMUNICABLE DISEASES PARTICIPANT (ATHLETE AND VOLUNTEER) RISK ASSESSMENT, CODE OF CONDUCT, AND WAIVER.			
<b>Operations</b> <i>Consistent in all protocols</i>	Event organizers must have a COVID-19 Coordinator. Event organizers must have a plan for identifying and isolating individuals with COVID symptoms, rapid testing (if necessary), contract tracing for the event, and notifying health authorities, per local requirements.			
<b>Onsite Screening</b> <i>Consistent in all protocols</i>	Written confirmation of no symptoms for all participants. Required of all events: Signage on preventive measures (handwashing distancing and masking) and education on symptoms and reminder to stay home if sick or any symptoms.			
<b>Positive COVID test or previous COVID disease</b> <i>Consistent in all protocols</i>	Athletes and Unified partners must provide written proof of clearance from their healthcare professional prior to returning to in-person activities.			
<b>Masking</b> <i>Not required during rigorous exercise</i>	Masks <b>recommended</b> for ALL participants.	Masks <b>recommended</b> for ALL participants.	Masks <b>required</b> for ALL participants indoors. Masks <b>recommended</b> outdoors when unable to physically distance.	Masks <b>required</b> for ALL participants.
<b>Transportation</b>	Masking required for all on any SO transportation, unless all participants are vaccinated.	Masking required for all on any SO transportation, unless all participants are vaccinated.	Masking required for all on any SO transportation, unless all participants are vaccinated.	Private transportation encouraged as much as possible. Masking required for all on any SO transportation.

Operating Protocols	Green	Blue	Yellow	Orange
<b>Travel</b>	Unvaccinated participants traveling to overnight events will need to provide negative COVID test results prior to departure from home county.	Unvaccinated participants traveling to overnight events will need to provide negative COVID test results prior to departure from home county.	Unvaccinated participants traveling to overnight events will need to provide negative COVID test results prior to departure from home county.	<b>Not permitted outside local area, state, province/territory.</b>
<b>Pre-event testing</b> <i>Only required for overnight events, not required for training or single day events</i>	Pre-event testing is <b>not required.</b>	Testing for unvaccinated participants required within 48 hours prior to departure for overnight events. Testing may be conducted periodically during the event depending on duration. Individuals must provide negative test results in order to travel to the event. See "Event Management" in the Appendix for additional details.  SOPA will provide rapid at-home antigen test to Local Programs. PCR test will be accepted with the required 48 hour timeframe.	Testing for unvaccinated participants required within 48 hours prior to departure for overnight events. Testing may be conducted periodically during the event depending on duration. Individuals must provide negative test results in order to travel to the event. See "Event Management" in the Appendix for additional details.  SOPA will provide rapid at-home antigen test to Local Programs. PCR test will be accepted within the required 48 hour timeframe.	Testing not required, because overnight events are not permitted.
<b>Accommodations</b>	For competitive and non-competitive events, vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals cannot room together (exceptions may be made for individuals who live in the same household). Unvaccinated participants must room with another unvaccinated participant or placed in a single room.	For competitive and non-competitive events, vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals cannot room together (exceptions may be made for individuals who live in the same household). Unvaccinated participants must room with another unvaccinated participant or placed in a single room.	For competitive and non-competitive events, vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals cannot room together (exceptions may be made for individuals who live in the same household). Unvaccinated participants must room with another unvaccinated participant or placed in a single room.	Overnight events are not permitted.
<b>Spectators</b> All individuals who are not part of the delegation	<b>Permitted</b> per local authority regulations. Separation from participants as much as possible.	<b>Permitted</b> per local authority regulations. Separation from participants as much as possible.	<b>Permitted</b> per local authority regulations. <b>Must</b> be separated from athletes.	<b>Permitted</b> per local authority regulations. <b>Must</b> be separated from athletes.
<b>Meals</b>	No restrictions on meals.	<b>No self-serve buffet meals. Participants should bring own water bottles.</b>	<b>No self-serve buffet meals. Participants should bring own water bottles.</b> Stagger mealtimes and dining groups as much as possible.	<b>No self-serve buffet meals. Participants should bring own water bottles.</b> Stagger mealtimes and dining groups as much as possible.

Operating Protocols	Green	Blue	Yellow	Orange
<b>Ceremonies</b>	Follow size restrictions, venue options and risk mitigation guidance per above.	Follow size restrictions, venue options and risk mitigation guidance per above.	Follow size restrictions, venue options and risk mitigation guidance per above. Strongly recommended outdoors if possible.	Follow size restrictions, venue options and risk mitigation guidance per above. Find alternatives to placing medals around the athletes' necks to maintain distancing. Strongly recommended outdoors if possible.

**REQUIREMENTS:**

**To conduct in-person activities SOPA Local Programs must adhere to the following:**

- **Masking:** The mask policy applies to all participants, masks are not required when actively engaged in physical activity; required on SO provided transportation unless all participants are vaccinated.
  
- **COVID-19 Coordinator:** The site must designate a primary point of contact for all questions related to COVID-19. This individual will receive training resources from SOPA. All participants must be provided the individual's contact information. The COVID-19 Coordinator must communicate potential cases to the local health authorities for testing and to SOPA (within privacy laws).
  
- **COMMUNICABLE DISEASES PARTICIPANT (ATHLETE AND VOLUNTEER) RISK ASSESSMENT, CODE OF CONDUCT, AND WAIVER:**  
 The [COMMUNICABLE DISEASES PARTICIPANT \(ATHLETE AND VOLUNTEER\) RISK ASSESSMENT, CODE OF CONDUCT, AND WAIVER](#) provides information and guidance on assessing risk and acknowledges that participation could increase risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19.
  - One COMMUNICABLE DISEASES PARTICIPANT (ATHLETE AND VOLUNTEER) RISK ASSESSMENT, CODE OF CONDUCT, AND WAIVER submission is required per sport per season.
  - Participants do not need to do a new COMMUNICABLE DISEASES PARTICIPANT (ATHLETE AND VOLUNTEER) RISK ASSESSMENT, CODE OF CONDUCT, AND WAIVER for every event if it is the same sport.
    - Example: If participant trains in LDR and completed the COMMUNICABLE DISEASES PARTICIPANT (ATHLETE AND VOLUNTEER) RISK ASSESSMENT, CODE OF CONDUCT, AND WAIVER in the fall, they do not need to complete a new the COMMUNICABLE DISEASES PARTICIPANT (ATHLETE AND VOLUNTEER) RISK ASSESSMENT, CODE OF CONDUCT, AND WAIVER for an invitational, sectional or for Fall Fest.
  - COMMUNICABLE DISEASES PARTICIPANT (ATHLETE AND VOLUNTEER) RISK ASSESSMENT, CODE OF CONDUCT, AND WAIVER submission is required for EACH sport.
    - Example: If participant trains in LDR and completed the COMMUNICABLE DISEASES PARTICIPANT (ATHLETE AND VOLUNTEER) RISK ASSESSMENT, CODE OF CONDUCT, AND WAIVER in the fall, and also bocce in the fall, they do need to complete a new the COMMUNICABLE DISEASES PARTICIPANT (ATHLETE AND VOLUNTEER) RISK ASSESSMENT, CODE OF CONDUCT, AND WAIVER.
  
- **Screening Protocol and Screening and Tracking Report Form:** The COVID-19 Coordinator must screen and monitor all participants for symptoms. Prior to entering an activity, practice, event, or gathering, the COVID-19 Coordinator:
  - Must set-up a space for screening that maintains physical distance (6ft/2m) during screening.
  - Must ask the following questions (reinforced through visuals and verbally, such as a paper with icons):
    - In the last 14 days, have you had contact with someone who has been sick with COVID-19?
      - If yes, individual should be instructed to self-quarantine per local regulations.



- Have you had a fever in the last week (temperature of 100.4°F/37.8°C or higher)?
    - Do you have a cough and/or difficulty breathing?
    - 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)?
    - Have you been vaccinated for COVID-19?
    - If you have been vaccinated for COVID-19, which type of vaccine did you receive (Pfizer, Moderna OR Johnson & Johnson) AND which dose number have you received (1, 2 OR FULL dose with Booster)?
  - Must record all names, results and contact information and keep in case needed for contact tracing or reporting.
    - If yes to any symptom 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.
    - Participants who are found to have COVID-19 must wait 7 days after symptoms resolve to return to activity OR must provide written proof of physician clearance to Special Olympics Pennsylvania to return earlier.
    - If an Athlete OR Unified Partner has tested positive and/or has been diagnosed with COVID-19, they must provide written proof of clearance from their healthcare professional prior to returning to in-person activities.
- **Positive Participant:** If a participant has been exposed, tested positive and/or been diagnosed with COVID-19 while actively participating in current in-person activities, in an abundance of caution, the site must shut down for at least 14 days to self-quarantine. The site COVID-19 Coordinator must follow these steps:
  - Notify your assigned Regional Sport Director or Field Director immediately:
    - Region 2 - The Wilds Region: Kristen Lenig [klenig@specialolympicspa.org](mailto:klenig@specialolympicspa.org)
    - Region 5 - Greater Lehigh Valley Pocono Region: Jason Merola [jmerola@specialolympicspa.org](mailto:jmerola@specialolympicspa.org)
    - Region 7 - Capital Area Region: Shannon Pechart [spechart@specialolympicspa.org](mailto:spechart@specialolympicspa.org)
    - Philadelphia- Michelle Cordell [mcardell@specialolympicspa.org](mailto:mcordell@specialolympicspa.org)
    - Pittsburgh - Jessie Merckle [jmerckle@specialolympicspa.org](mailto:jmerckle@specialolympicspa.org)
    - Other Programs - report to your assigned Field Director
      - Jim Binz [jbinz@specialolympicspa.org](mailto:jbinz@specialolympicspa.org)
      - Gina Reid [greid@specialolympicspa.org](mailto:greid@specialolympicspa.org)
  - Notify the Program Manager/Team Leader by phone immediately after notifying your regional point of contact or Field Director.
  - If an Athlete OR Unified Partner has tested positive and/or has been diagnosed with COVID-19, they must provide written proof of clearance from their healthcare professional prior to returning to in-person activities.
- **First Aid:** First aid should absolutely be provided by coaches, volunteers, or staff if required during an activity, even if physical distancing is not feasible during the aid. If it is a medical emergency, call the local emergency medical services or 911. If it is a non-medical emergency, but basic first aid is needed, individuals providing care should follow proper hand hygiene and wash hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer and put on a surgical facemask and disposable gloves prior to administering first aid. If the athlete is breathing and conscious, they should also be wearing a face covering. Administer the first aid and then properly dispose

of all supplies and gloves. After care is provided, ensure individuals follow proper hand hygiene and wash their hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer. All activities should have

a basic first aid kit on site which should also include a surgical facemask, disposable gloves, and hand sanitizer/disinfectant. A face shield or protective eye wear may also be useful.

### **APPROVAL PROCESS:**

- The COVID-19 Coordinator must submit the [Site Registration Form](#), which is found on the SOPA website. The purpose of this form is to register a Local Program in-person activity. This form must be completed and submitted by the COVID-19 Coordinator prior to the start of the activity.
- SOPA will respond to registration requests within 48 hours (excluding weekends). The COVID-19 Coordinator must receive approval from SOPA prior to the start of the activity.
  - The Regional Sport Director or Field Director will email the Program Manager to endorse the site and COVID-19 Coordinator.
- Every participant (Athletes, Unified Partners, Coaches, Officials, Volunteers, HODs, SO Staff, and families/caregivers if they will not exclusively be in spectator only spaces) is required to complete the COMMUNICABLE DISEASES PARTICIPANT (ATHLETE AND VOLUNTEER) RISK ASSESSMENT, CODE OF CONDUCT, AND WAIVER prior to the start of the in-person activity.
  - The COMMUNICABLE DISEASES PARTICIPANT (ATHLETE AND VOLUNTEER) RISK ASSESSMENT, CODE OF CONDUCT, AND WAIVER must be electronically signed and submitted via Google Forms.
  - If a participant does not have access to submit electronically or ability to send a photo of the completed form to the site COVID-19 Coordinator, participant must schedule a call with the site COVID-19 Coordinator at least 24 hours prior to the first in-person activity to verbally provide their answers to the site COVID-19 Coordinator.
    - Site COVID-19 Coordinator will enter form electronically based on information provided by participant.
  - COVID-19 Coordinator can confirm who has submitted forms by checking their Screening and Tracking Report Form. Participant names will be populated as they submit forms.
  - The COVID-19 Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that forms have been submitted to SOPA for all participants.
- The COVID-19 Coordinator is responsible for completing the Screening and Tracking Report Form at each site.
  - The Screening and Tracking Report Form will be an electronic form in Google Sheets and will be specific to each site.
  - The link to the electronic Screening and Tracking Report Form will be shared with the COVID-19 Coordinator before the start of the activity.
  - Programs will have the option of a paper version for tracking onsite if they do not have digital access to the electronic version.
  - If the COVID-19 Coordinator completes a paper version, they MUST transfer that data to the electronic form within 48 hours of the end of the activity.

### **TRAVEL/TRANSPORTATION:**

#### **Requirements for all transportation:**

- Every vehicle must have a designated individual to monitor for compliance at all times.
- Onsite screening of all participants must occur prior to boarding buses or vans.
- Masking is required for all on SOPA provided/arranged transportation unless all participants in the vehicle are vaccinated.
- No shared food, use only individually packaged items. When required, masks must be placed over the nose and mouth whenever not actively eating or drinking.

- Hand hygiene/sanitization should be followed.
- Local Programs should thoroughly understand what COVID-19 safety protocols the bus company or third-party transportation vendor they are going to contract with is implementing. For example: Are all drivers fully vaccinated and/or regularly tested (and how often, if so)? What are they doing to restrict/control entry onto the bus by others who aren't cleared personnel or approved SOPA participants? What are their vehicle cleaning regimens? Will they/the driver play any role in enforcing COVID-19 safety requirements or would the Local Program be expected to do that?
- **Orange Operating Protocol:**
  - Cannot travel outside of their Local Program or host individuals from other Local Programs.
  - Travel within county/Local Program:
    - Private transportation encouraged as much as possible.
    - Masking required for all on any SOPA provided/arranged transportation.
- **Blue and Yellow Operating Protocol:**
  - Unvaccinated participants traveling to overnight events will need to provide negative COVID test results prior to departure from home county.
- **School-provided transportation:** If a school is using its buses/vehicles to transport school-based athletes to a school or school district event, then the athletes and teachers would be subject to the school or school district's protocols and liability. If a school is using its buses/vehicles to transport school-based athletes to a sanctioned SOPA sponsored event, the Local Program must be aware of the school's protocols and complement with guidance above for third party transportation providers.

**APPENDIX:**

1. COVID-19 Coordinator Responsibilities
2. Fact Sheet on Who is at Higher Risk from COVID-19
3. COMMUNICABLE DISEASES PARTICIPANT (ATHLETE AND VOLUNTEER) RISK ASSESSMENT, CODE OF CONDUCT, AND WAIVER
4. Screening and Tracking Report Form
5. Signage and Educational Posters on Precautions & COVID-19 Symptoms
6. Fundraising Activities
7. Young Athletes
8. Event Management