

WHAT DO I DO IF THERE IS AN EMERGENCY OR A SITUATION THAT I AM UNSURE ABOUT?

If there is an imminent threat to a person or facility:

- Contact the proper authorities or emergency personnel (ex. police, fire, ambulance) if there are health or security issues.
 - Be able to provide exact location; giving facility name, address
 - Collect critical information (who, what, when, where, why, how)
- At a venue, flag down or shout for Special Olympics Security (SOS – orange shirts), the Venue Coordinator or the Event Director. That individual will take all necessary follow-up steps.
- In the meantime, remain calm and assure the safety of those around you.
- Recruit other volunteers to help evacuate the immediate area or venue as necessary. Be sure to remove uninvolved individuals from the area for the safety and comfort of all involved.

If the emergency involves an unconscious/injured person:

- Ensure there is no danger to you or the injured party
- Do not move the injured party unless their life is in danger (fire, collapse of building)
- Remain on the phone with the 911 operator
- Remain with injured party until help arrives
- When help arrives, call the SOPA Medical Staff
- If at a venue, flag down or send someone to get SOS/Event Director or a Medical Staff Member

That individual will take all necessary follow-up steps.

If the situation poses no immediate danger, call or flag down Security (SOS) or Medical staff.

For non-emergency first aid or medical conditions, contact the SOPA Medical Staff or SOS Operations Center. The Medical Staff is trained to provide guidance as to how serious the situation is, and if an emergency response team is needed. Medical Staff personnel are trained in first aid and carry first aid kits.

ABOUT SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Special Olympics is a global movement that unleashes the human spirit through the transformative power and joy of sport, every day around the world. Through sports, health, education and community programming, Special Olympics is tackling inactivity, intolerance, isolation and injustice that people throughout the world face, especially people with intellectual disabilities.

The mission of Special Olympics is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

HOW CAN I STAY INVOLVED AND HELP BEYOND TODAY?

- Visit our website at www.specialolympicspa.org to learn more about the Movement and how you can get involved.
- Volunteer – There is a place for everyone in our organization. Contact the city/county Special Olympics program nearest to you for more information via our website.
- Donate directly to the local program nearest to you, or to our State office. If you donate by check, 100% of your donation will benefit Special Olympics athletes in Pennsylvania. You can, however, also make a contribution online via our website.
- Fundraise to support our organization. Check out our website for state fundraising events (i.e. Polar Bear Plunges, Law Enforcement Torch Runs, etc.) or contact the local program nearest to you to learn about local events.



GUIDE FOR ONE-DAY

VOLUNTEERS

THE TIME YOU SPEND WITH ATHLETES TODAY
WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR A LIFETIME...

**Special
Olympics**
Pennsylvania



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Special Olympics
Pennsylvania



THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING TO VOLUNTEER WITH SPECIAL OLYMPICS PENNSYLVANIA (SOPA)!

Volunteers are the backbone of our organization. The time, energy and enthusiasm of volunteers fuel our movement and make our athletes' dreams a reality. You are playing an integral role in the successful operation of our organization.

As a "One-Day" event volunteer, you will be supporting the overall coordination of the competition.

YOU ARE NOT to oversee and/or chaperone any athletes or other volunteers, and therefore, are not to assume any oversight of athletes (however minor) at any time.

WHAT IF I AM UNCLEAR OR UNSURE ABOUT WHAT I AM SUPPOSED TO BE DOING?

If you have questions or concerns about your assignment, please ask! If you have a question, chances are other people in your group do too. Each volunteer holds an essential role; therefore, it is important that you understand your responsibilities and properly engage in your assigned venue activities. This will ensure that the Games run smoothly.

WHAT IF I NEED TO LEAVE EARLY?

If you need to leave before the end of your scheduled shift, for any reason, please let the Venue Coordinator or a Special Olympics Pennsylvania representative know upon your arrival, or as soon as you become aware, so they can account for that change during the day and fill your spot. Remind the Venue Coordinator/SOPA representative prior to leaving.

I'VE NEVER WORKED WITH SOMEONE WITH A DISABILITY. WHAT DO I DO?

- First, introduce yourself! Remember that people with intellectual disabilities and people without intellectual disabilities are more alike than different.
- Both children and adults participate in Special Olympics, so please refer to all participants as "athletes" rather than "kids."
- A common misconception is that Special Olympics athletes need to be talked down to or talked to as if they were very young children. While athletes' reasoning abilities may be delayed, talk with them and treat them according to their age.
- Athletes thrive on receiving encouragement, but let them take the lead as to what type of recognition they are comfortable with; pat on the back, high five, handshake, etc. You should also be comfortable setting your own limits and should caution an athlete if an action makes you feel uncomfortable.
- Be yourself. Use your normal voice and give support, but try not to over praise. Don't exaggerate the accomplishments of athletes. Special Olympics athletes will gain the most from being judged fairly and without overstatement.
- As a volunteer, you will want to do everything you can to respect the dignity of the athletes that you will meet. Respecting dignity and being sensitive to cultural differences is probably as important as anything you will do at the Games.
- The athlete's coach or chaperone will be in the area overseeing the athlete during their participation and will be a great assistance if you have questions.
- Whenever possible, always deal directly with the athlete. Direct all questions, comments or concerns directly to the individual and do not hesitate to ask an athlete for advice. We learn together.

WHAT IS DIVISIONING AND WHY DO WE DO IT?

The goal of Divisioning is to give every athlete a fair, reasonable chance to excel. You will see several gold medals given out for the same sport/event. They are being awarded based on age, ability and gender of their competitors, this is what we call "Divisioning" and it is unique to Special Olympics.

THE "DO'S AND DON'TS" OF YOUR ROLE?

DO

- Stay engaged while in your assignment
- Congratulate competitors/coaches with a high-five or handshake
- Report any non-emergency concerns to the Venue Coordinator
- Respect the athletes and speak to them at their age level
- Have fun and open yourself to the "Abilities," not "Disabilities" of these individuals

DON'T

- Interfere with any competition/event
- Use electronic devices for fun/entertainment during your assignment. Stay focused on your role

As you perform your volunteer duties, don't be afraid to ask coaches or other volunteers for help if you see a problem occurring.

Most importantly, relax, enjoy yourself and have fun! This will be one of the most memorable experiences of your life. Get to know as many athletes and coaches as you can. The more people you see and meet, the more you (and they) will enjoy the Games.