



Special Olympics BC Communicable Disease Prevention Plan

Supporting SOBC's safe Return to Sport

August 2024

Special Olympics
British Columbia



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Contact

If you have any questions relating to this plan, please don't hesitate to reach out to Special Olympics BC Vice President, Sport & Programs, Michelle Cruickshank:

mcruickshank@specialolympics.bc.ca

250-802-4019

PURPOSE

As COVID-19 vaccinations have become widely available to British Columbians, the overall risk of COVID-19 transmission and serious consequences has diminished. Despite this, the virus will still circulate like other communicable diseases.

This plan explains the ongoing measures to reduce the risk of communicable disease and additional measures for when there's an elevated risk of communicable disease. It is informed by WorkSafeBC, viaSport British Columbia provincial guidelines, and provincial health recommendations.

This plan is intended to help Special Olympics BC's volunteers, athletes, caregivers, and staff safely participate in in-person programs and events in B.C. The SOBC Communicable Disease Prevention Plan provides expectations, information, and resources to support decision-making and communication within SOBC programs and events.

Our plan has been developed based on an assessment of the potential risks that may be faced by our organization. We have consulted with employees, volunteers, and athletes. Potential risks will continue to be reassessed, and plans updated as needed.

As more information becomes available, the SOBC Communicable Disease Prevention Plan will be updated on the [SOBC website](#). This document is only valid as of the date listed on the first page. Please check [our website](#) for the most up-to-date version.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

A communicable disease is an illness caused by an infectious agent or its toxic product that can be transmitted in a workplace from one person to another. Examples of communicable diseases include COVID-19, the common cold, seasonal flu, foodborne illness, smallpox, Hepatitis, etc.

Symptoms of these diseases may include:

Fever	Shortness of breath	Cough
Chills	Sore throat and painful swallowing	Stuffy or runny nose
Fatigue	Headache	Loss of sense of smell
Loss of appetite	Muscle aches	And more

If you are feeling *any* irregular symptoms, please consult a physician.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION SAFETY PROTOCOL

Special Olympics BC is committed to the ongoing safety of athletes, coaches, volunteers, and all members of our community. SOBC requires all program and event participants to follow these safety measures.

ALL PARTICIPANTS

- 1) Before a program or event, all participants must have reviewed and understood the SOBC Communicable Disease Prevention Plan, and completed the SOBC waiver.

ATHLETES AND COACHES: This means you need to have completed the [registration package and waiver](#) for the current season. You don't need to redo the waiver before every practice.

- 2) Before attending an SOBC program or event, all participants must review their own health. Ask yourself if you are feeling sick or experiencing any irregular symptoms such as fever, chills, cough or worsening of chronic cough, sore throat, runny nose, loss of sense of smell or taste, nausea or vomiting, etc.

If you are sick, do not attend the program/event. There will be zero tolerance for participating while sick.

Please contact a physician or 811 for support for your health if needed.

- 3) If you have been in close contact with someone who has been diagnosed with a communicable disease, please do not attend the program/event until you're certain you do not have the disease – please consult your physician or 811 for support.
- 4) All participants need to wash or sanitize their hands when entering and exiting the venue, and often during a program.
- 5) Masks are optional for all participants ages 5 years and older when they are not engaged in physical activity. Please be respectful of others and their choices.
 - a. If your facility requires mask wearing off the field of play, you must follow that rule.
- 6) Participants need to cover coughs and sneezes. Cough or sneeze into your sleeve, not your hands – OR cover your nose and mouth with a tissue and put your used tissue in a wastebasket. Avoid touching your face with your hands.
- 7) Participants need to bring their own filled water bottles, instead of using community water fountains, whenever possible.
- 8) If a participant tests positive for COVID-19, they can return to Special Olympics BC programs and events 5 days after their symptoms end. If they attended a Special

Olympics BC program or event within 3 days of testing positive, they are asked to update their coach or event organizers, who will manage that information confidentially and must contact their Local Coordinator and SOBC Vice President, Sport & Programs, Michelle Cruickshank (cell 250-802-4019, email mcruickshank@specialolympics.bc.ca). SOBC and the Local will work together to communicate with all program participants for safety and monitoring, and to offer support to the ill participant. Confidentiality will be preserved at all times.

PROGRAM/EVENT OPERATIONS

Group Sizes

- Outdoor and indoor sport training (all ages) can operate within whatever capacity their facility allows, as long as all SOBC Communicable Disease Plan protocols can be followed completely. All groups must follow the [SOBC policy for their sport's athlete-to-coach ratios](#).
- If a Local wishes to host a meeting, registration event, or fundraising event with more than 100 people, they must apply to their Region's Community Development Coordinator with an event plan. The plan or sanctioning application should describe how they will ensure physical distancing, safety, and hygiene, as well as any food and beverages being considered. Events with more than 100 people will be permitted as long as it is clear SOBC safety protocols can be followed completely.

Physical Distancing

- It is recommended that wherever possible, program and event participants continue practicing physical distancing.

Personnel and Equipment

- The program/event must have a specific person designated to maintain current and accurate attendance lists, review the Communicable Disease Prevention Plan with participants, and make sure safety standards are followed. Please see Appendix A for the Safety Volunteer's full responsibilities. (NOTE: In smaller programs, this role may be fulfilled by a coach instead of a separate volunteer.)
- Organizers must work with your facility to ensure you have the best ventilation possible.
- Each program or event's first-aid kit must include all standard required content as well as:
 - Disinfectant wipes and/or cleaning products recommended by the [BC Centre for Disease Control](#);
 - Hand sanitizer;
 - Gloves;
 - Masks and eye protection (goggles, glasses, or face shields) for emergency purposes;

- Resources to follow the universal precautions for blood-borne contagious infections – [please see the SOBC policy](#).
- Equipment (especially shared sport equipment) and high-touch surfaces must be cleaned regularly after training sessions.
- Spectators are allowed at events and practices, when permitted by the facility, while following all of the facility's safety requirements. The Safety Volunteer is asked to ensure that spectators can watch from an area where they have a good view but are separate from program participants.
- All SOBC programs and events must follow all their facility's safety requirements.
- At this time, food and beverages should not be provided at sport programs or meetings. Individuals may bring and consume their own beverages.

Travel and Competition

- Travel for sport within B.C. is permitted.
 - Locals considering travel outside B.C. must first apply for permission, per [SOBC's pre-existing policy](#), in order to maintain insurance coverage.
 - If you are an athlete who wishes to train outside your home Local, you must complete your request to transfer form for the current season and submit it to your Local Coordinator for review by the SOBC Leadership Council.
- All Locals wishing to host a competition must complete and submit the required [SOBC sanctioning documents](#) before the event.

Communication

- After a program or event, if a known participant is diagnosed with COVID-19 or hospitalized with a communicable disease, contact SOBC Vice President, Sport & Programs, Michelle Cruickshank as soon as possible, for assistance in determining next steps: mcruickshank@specialolympics.bc.ca or 250-802-4019. Early detection of communicable disease transmission will facilitate the immediate implementation of protective measures.

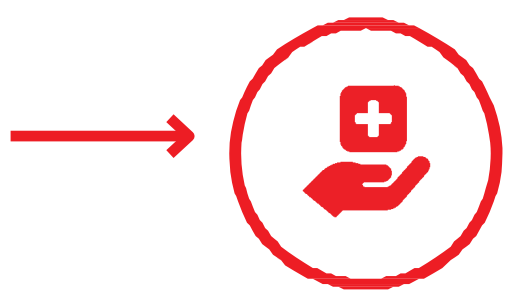
If a participant feels ill:



Do not attend training or program



Advise family/caregiver (if applicable) and SOBC



Seek appropriate medical treatment



Assess your health status before returning



Follow medical requirements for treatment and isolation, if needed



APPENDIX A

ROLE OF PROGRAM/EVENT SAFETY VOLUNTEER

The Safety Volunteer will maintain current and accurate attendance lists, review the Communicable Disease Prevention Plan with program/event participants, and make sure safety standards are followed at the program/event.

This person must be very familiar with the SOBC Communicable Disease Prevention Plan and related training resources, in order to support and share the requirements in place to provide a safe and positive return to sport for all involved.

In smaller programs, a coach may take on this role. The list of duties is below.

- Reviewing the SOBC Communicable Disease Prevention Plan with all participants at the beginning of the program or event.
- Ensuring that all participants have completed SOBC registration and waiver forms, and that emergency contact information is on hand at every program.
- Maintaining a complete record of attendance for each practice or event.
- Working with the Local to ensure the program/event has hand sanitizer and cleaning supplies prior to start.
- Ensuring program/event has gloves and masks available for situations requiring first aid or medical attention until first responders arrive.
- Ensuring participants know where the program/event's hand sanitizer/hand washing station is located.
- Ensuring participants wash/sanitize their hands prior to, during, and after the program.
- Ensuring that participants are not sharing personal items such as water bottles.
- Ensuring that all equipment used is cleaned at the end of the program.
- Ensuring that those wearing masks are doing so correctly.
- Working with spectators per the safety protocols (please see page 6).

APPENDIX B

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE OUTBREAK PROTOCOL

Special Olympics BC remains alert and ready to adapt to ensure our commitment to keeping members safe. The following chart is not being used right now. It is just to show escalation measures that may be taken if we need to respond to an increased health risk due to a communicable disease. The measures listed in the plan above are what must be followed at the given time.

Participants must always follow government and Provincial Health Officer requirements when in place.

	High-Level Risk	Escalated Health and Safety Concerns	Regular Local Programming
Health Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to Provincial Health Officer and local health authorities Increased hand hygiene Health screenings at practices and meetings Signage and markers to be used as visual cues for distancing Masks required for all activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain physical distance Increased hand hygiene Signage and markers to be used as visual cues for distancing Masks required for indoor activities, strongly suggested for outdoor activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow and ensure everyone is familiar with the SOBC Communicable Disease Prevention Plan Hand and equipment cleaning Staying home when sick
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where possible, rent dedicated facility space to preserve boundaries Have barriers in place to keep spectators at a distance Refer to facility procedures and protocols 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to facility procedures and protocols Outdoor facilities encouraged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to facility procedures and protocols
Sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coaches and athletes may only participate in 1 SOBC program at a time Focus on individual sport skill development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coaches and athletes may participate in more than 1 program at a time Game play permitted for outdoor programs only if 2 metres physical distancing is maintained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No restrictions on activities
Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No shared equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimize shared equipment Disinfect program equipment between training sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly disinfect equipment
Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within Local boundaries only 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional travel may be considered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular travel between Locals

APPENDIX C

RESOURCES

PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

[B.C.'s Restart](#)

GUIDANCE FOR CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

[BC Centre for Disease Control](#)

POSTERS

[WorkSafe BC Handwashing](#)

[WorkSafe BC Cover Coughs and Sneezes](#)

VIDEOS

[Proper Handwashing by Special Olympics Athlete Nyasha Derere](#)

[Wearing a Non-Medical Mask or Face Covering](#)