

Swimming Safety Policy

SWIMMING SAFETY POLICY

The following requirements must be established before a pool can be used for Special Olympics training, competition, or recreation. Recreational swimming is any swimming or swimming-like activity that occurs outside of sanctioned Special Olympics swimming training or competition. Examples include participating in swimming or swimming-like activities (Jacuzzis, hot tubs) at pools, lakes, oceans, rivers, water parks, or other bodies of water during an athlete, team or delegation's "down time" during a Special Olympics training, competition, or activity. This includes but is not limited to housing and activity locations such as hotels, dormitories, military base housing, private residences, parks, and host town accommodations.

1. Basic Rules

- a. This policy is in effect from the time a coach or volunteer takes responsibility of an athlete to the time that athlete is returned to his/her parent or guardian.
- b. There must be at least one (1) certified lifeguard for every 20 participants in the water. If the facility has a stricter ratio, then it must be followed.
- c. Athlete Medical Forms shall be on site and relevant medical information on participants should be discussed with the lifeguard and medical personnel on duty in advance of the activity.
- d. The sole function of the lifeguard shall be to guard. If no lifeguard is available, the pool must be emptied, even for short durations when a lifeguard must leave the pool side.
- e. A copy of the Emergency Action Plan, the pool's emergency procedures, and current rules must be reviewed prior to using the pool or body of water on each occasion.
- f. Pool depths must be marked and clearly visible.
- g. The minimum pool depth for racing starts (off of starting blocks or off of the pool deck) is four (4) feet.
- h. "No Diving" must be posted in any area with a pool depth less than five (5) feet.
- i. For recreational swimming or training sessions, safety lines must be in place to divide shallow and deep water areas.
- j. An athlete with Down syndrome who has been diagnosed with Atlanto-Axial Instability may not participate in butterfly events, individual medley events, diving starts, or diving.
- k. All Local Health and Safety Code standards must be followed.

2. Emergency Action Plan

- a. An Emergency Action Plan shall be in place prior to any Special Olympics participants entering the water for any reason, be it training, competition, or recreation. The original plan should be written and reviewed by the event personnel on hand. The plan shall include the following:
 - i. The procedure for obtaining emergency medical support if a medical doctor or medical support is not present.
 - ii. The posts and areas of responsibilities for each lifeguard.
 - iii. The procedure for obtaining weather information or weather watch information, particularly if the event is outside.
 - iv. The procedure for reporting accidents.
 - v. The chain of command in case of a serious accident, including who is assigned to talk to the press.