

# Sport-Specific Protocol: Swimming

Status: Return to Practice

Last Updated: December 15, 2020

**Special Olympics**



This document is specific to the sport of swimming and is supplemental to the general *Return to Activities Protocol*. It is imperative that swimming programs adhere to any protocol outlined below or in the general *Return to Activities Protocol*. If your facility or local government has rules in place that are stricter than those provided by Special Olympics, those local rules are to be followed.

## BEFORE PARTICIPANT ARRIVAL

- Communicate to each swimmer that if they utilize goggles, they are required to bring their own.
- Communicate to each swimmer that it is highly recommended they arrive in their swimsuit and are prepared to depart in their swimsuit.
- Ensure venue is disinfected, especially restrooms and high traffic areas, such as doors and entry ways.
- Sanitize kickboards or other equipment provided by the team. Equipment cannot be shared, so be sure that there is enough for each swimmer to have his or her own equipment. It is recommended that equipment is labeled, when possible, to prevent swimmers from accidentally swapping equipment.
- Designate a space for each swimmer to set his/her gear (water bottle, towel, etc.) that is at least 6 feet from another swimmer's space.
- Clearly mark spaces at least 6 feet apart on the pool deck for swimmers to occupy when they are not in the water. This may be the same space that was designated for their gear.
- Collect *COVID-19 Code of Conduct* from all attendees (coaches, volunteers, county management, etc.).

## PARTICIPANT CHECK-IN

- Designate one location to enter the facility for check-in and screening.
- Check-in area must be setup so that social distancing is maintained.
- If possible, check-in area should be setup outside to reduce bottlenecks and close-quarter interactions.
- Make regular announcements to reinforce the importance of PPE, hand hygiene, and social distancing.
- *Athlete Medical Forms* must be on-site and checked as usual.
- Check that each participant has a *COVID-19 Code of Conduct* on-site.
- Must follow the "Onsite Screening Protocol for COVID-19" as outlined in the *Return to Activities Protocol*.
- Collect *COVID-19 Code of Conduct* from all attendees (players, coaches, county management, etc.).

## LOCKER ROOMS

- Locker room use is strongly discouraged.
- If locker rooms must be used, limit capacity and stagger times that groups are allowed inside.
- Prior to use, coaches should make swimmers aware that all protocols are still in place inside the locker room.

## LIFEGUARDS

- Lifeguards are subject to all protocols. It is strongly recommended that lifeguards are briefed prior to practice.
- Lifeguards must be willing to perform CPR and come into direct contact with a swimmer in an emergency situation.

- The lifeguard's first priority is the safety of swimmers in the water. Lifeguards are not responsible for monitoring or enforcing COVID protocols.

## DURING ACTIVITY

- Masks are required at all times, except when actively participating in practice. For example:
  - When in the water, masks are not required.
  - If swimmer is participating in dryland training activities on the pool deck (core workout, cardio, etc.), masks are not required.
- Social distancing must be maintained, except when rescuing a distressed swimmer or other emergency situations.
- No more than 4 swimmers are allowed in each lane of the pool.
- Each coach/referee must provide his/her own whistle. Electronic whistles are strongly recommended in lieu of a traditional blown whistle.
- Swimmers must sanitize their hands prior to getting in the pool.
- It is highly recommended that swimmers sanitize their hands regularly throughout practice.
- Kickboards and other equipment should be sanitized regularly throughout practice.
- Only coaches should setup equipment, and hands should be sanitized prior to equipment setup.
- High fives, handshakes, or other direct contact are NOT permitted.
- Make regular announcements to reinforce the importance of PPE, hand hygiene, and social distancing.

## AFTER ACTIVITY

- Swimmers should be encouraged to leave the practice area at the conclusion of practice. Use of restrooms as needed is acceptable.
- Encourage all swimmers to depart in their swimsuits to limit locker room usage.
- If multiple teams use the same facility, allow at least 30 minutes between practices to sanitize the facility and conduct screening on the arriving team.
- Social distancing must be maintained while waiting for rides. Swimmers waiting for rides should do so outside, weather permitting.
- Sanitize all equipment at the conclusion of practice.

## MEALS & WATER

- Meals
  - Meals are strongly discouraged.
  - If a meal will be served, boxed or bagged meals are preferred.
  - Food preparation, packaging, and serving must be done by the caterer or food service staff.
  - Napkins and utensils must be provided and individually distributed to each participant by the caterer or food service staff. Pre-packaged utensils are highly preferred.
  - No buffets or banquet style meals are permitted. Concession stands run by the facility are allowed to serve.
- You may distribute water provided:
  - The person distributing the water is utilizing PPE and proper sanitation procedures.
  - The water is in a sealed container.
  - One person is handling the water and players are not permitted to reach into the water reservoir.
  - Community water coolers should not be utilized.

## PENALTIES

- Programs that do not adhere to these protocols will be suspended from hosting swimming events for 1 year.
- Swimmers who do not adhere to these protocols may face punishment up to and including suspension from Special Olympics activities.
- Additional punishment may be given to County Management as warranted, on a case by case basis, according to the *Return to Activities Protocol*.