



**Special  
Olympics**  
Minnesota



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**SOMN.ORG**

*Created by the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation for the Benefit of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities.*

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# **GENERAL INFORMATION**

# ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

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## Structure of SOMN

Special Olympics Minnesota (SOMN) is an accredited state Program of Special Olympics, Inc. (SOI) based in Washington, D.C. Special Olympics Minnesota is governed by a Board of Directors whose essential functions are policy making, assuring sound management of the organization, increasing public awareness and actively participating in fundraising. Special Olympics Minnesota staff are responsible for carrying out the daily activities and operations of the organization on a statewide level and providing support and direction to volunteers.

## Mission of SOMN

Special Olympics Minnesota offers children and adults with intellectual disabilities year-round sports training and competition. Through Special Olympics' athletic, health and leadership programs, people with intellectual disabilities transform themselves, their communities and the world.

## Values of SOMN

- Respect** Valuing and accepting human differences and the unique abilities of all people in our communities.
- Accomplishment** Celebrating the fulfillment of individual potential.
- Choice** Providing opportunities for self-determination.
- Quality** Striving for excellence in all we do.
- Partnership** Achieving more than we can alone by collaborating with others.
- Integrity** Fostering a culture based on the highest standards of personal and professional principles.

## Special Olympics Oath

"Let me win.  
But if I cannot win,  
Let me be brave in the attempt."

## Purpose of the Program Administration Guide

The following information is intended to serve as a guide for SOMN leadership volunteers, particularly Local Sports Management Team members, Head of Delegations and head coaches. This guide provides general information and is not intended to be all-inclusive. Please contact [sports@somn.org](mailto:sports@somn.org) with any questions or requests for additional information.

# CALENDAR OF PROGRAM EVENTS

The following are recommended windows for training and competition based upon the projected state competition schedule. Delegations/Teams should use this general schedule when planning their calendar events for the year. While these dates are projected windows, we realize there may occasionally be exceptions on both levels dependent upon facilities, weather, etc. Activities/sports that fall outside these windows would be considered recreational programming.

## **WINTER GAMES** SPORTS: *Alpine, Poly Hockey, Powerlifting, Skiing, Snowboarding, Snowshoeing*

<b>QUALIFIER</b>	Late January - February
<b>STATE</b>	March

## **SUMMER GAMES** SPORTS: *Basketball, Gymnastics, Swimming, Track & Field*

	<b>Basketball, Swimming</b>	<b>Track &amp; Field, Gymnastics</b>
<b>QUALIFIER</b>	Late March/April	Late April - May
<b>STATE</b>	Mid-to-Late June	

## **EQUESTRIAN, GOLF, TENNIS**

<b>QUALIFIER</b>	July - Early August
<b>STATE</b>	August

## **SUMMER SPORTS CLASSIC** SPORTS: *Bocce, Softball*

<b>QUALIFIER</b>	July/August
<b>STATE</b>	September

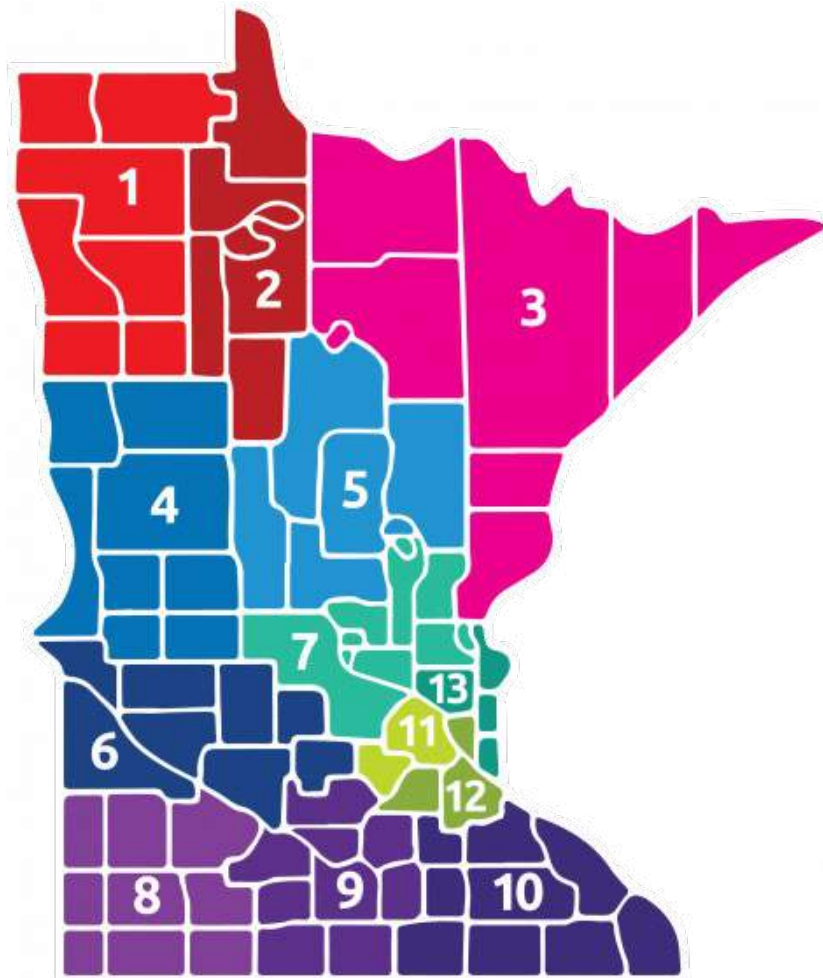
## **UNIFIED FLAG FOOTBALL**

<b>QUALIFIER</b>	September
<b>STATE</b>	October

## **BOWLING**

<b>STATE</b>	November
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# AREA MAP



## Area Map:

Area 1: Kittson, Mahnomen, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake & Roseau

Area 2: Beltrami, Clearwater, Hubbard & Lake of the Woods

Area 3: Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, Pine & St. Louis

Area 4: Becker, Clay, Douglas, Grant, Otter Tail, Pope, Stevens, Traverse & Wilkin

Area 5: Aitkin, Cass, Crow Wing, Morrison, Todd & Wadena

Area 6: Big Stone, Chippewa, Kandiyohi, Lac Qui Parle, McLeod, Meeker, Renville, Swift & Yellow Medicine

Area 7: Benton, Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs, Sherburne, Stearns & Wright

Area 8: Cottonwood, Jackson, Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Nobles, Pipestone, Redwood & Rock

Area 9: Blue Earth, Brown, Faribault, Le Sueur, Martin, Nicollet, Sibley, Waseca & Watonwan

Area 10: Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Rice, Steele, Wabasha & Winona

Area 11: Carver & Hennepin

Area 12: Dakota, Ramsey (partial) & Scott

Area 13: Anoka, Chisago, Ramsey (partial) & Washington

# **DELEGATION MANAGEMENT**



## DELEGATION MANAGEMENT AND COACHING

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Special Olympics Minnesota is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization whose existence and expansion depends upon the dedication of thousands of volunteers who help to promote the program through their schools, social service agencies, recreational programs, corporations, service organizations and community-based programs. Volunteers act as coaches, Unified partners and chaperones for SOMN athletes, Heads of Delegations, organizers of competitions and special events, sports officials and fundraisers to coordinate various aspects of the program.

A Class A volunteer is a person who has regular, close physical contact with athletes; has a position of authority or supervision (real or apparent); is in a position of trust with athletes; or handles substantial amounts of cash or other assets of the organization. In accordance with SOI's Participant Screening Policy, mandatory background checks will be conducted on all incoming Class A volunteers. Upon entering the Program, all Class A volunteers for SOMN must complete Level I Certification, which includes a Volunteer Application Form, general SOMN orientation, protective behaviors training, concussion awareness training and other important information. Current Class A volunteers will be re-screened every three years and will need updated certifications in order to register for competition.

Participant Screening Policy online: [coach.specialolympicsminnesota.org/resources/administrative-athlete-forms/](https://coach.specialolympicsminnesota.org/resources/administrative-athlete-forms/)

# MANAGEMENT APPROACH TO A LOCAL DELEGATION

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Though it is possible to run a Delegation on your own, most soon find they can use some help managing aspects of the team. Special Olympics Minnesota recommends a management approach to coordinating the activities required to ensure a successful local Program. Although details of individual job functions may be determined by each Delegation, the following are general responsibilities of the key volunteers and a sample of how you might divide the workload of managing a Special Olympics Delegation. The following information is designed as a resource to assist SOMN Delegations.

The goal of every local Delegation is to provide quality training and competition opportunities to Special Olympics athletes. The structure through which this is provided varies from Delegation to Delegation. The two common models are a traditional Delegation structure and a Local Sports Management Team (LSMT).

## MODEL 1: TRADITIONAL DELEGATION STRUCTURE

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A traditional Delegation structure involves a Head of Delegation and sports-specific head and assistant coaches organizing a Program built around the athletes' interests. This is commonly the structure for Delegations in smaller communities with fewer athletes and sports offerings.

### Head of Delegation Requirements & Responsibilities

- Primary contact with SOMN
- Is listed on website with SOMN
- Responsible for administration of the Delegation which may include athlete forms, games registration, training and competition management, budget/financial accounting, fundraising and public relations
- Recruits coaches for the Delegation

### Head Coach Requirements & Responsibilities (sports-specific)

- Must be designated for each sport the Delegation offers.
- Must be 18 years of age or older
- Is required to have a minimum of Level 2 certification for the specific sport in which the individual is designated as head coach. (See the Coaches Certification Program on page 12 for additional information.)
- Responsible for the conduct and well-being of athletes and assistant coaches during training and competition
- Recruit athletes and assess skill levels
- Select sports based on athlete input
- Develop training schedule and conduct practice sessions
- Coach and supervise athletes during competitions
- Ensure safety and well-being of athletes
- Provide first aid as necessary
- Attend coaches meetings
- Maintain medical forms for athletes

### Assistant Coach Requirements & Responsibilities

In order to provide for the health and safety of our athletes and provide quality sports training, SOMN recommends that all assistant coaches be at least 16 years of age.

## MODEL 1: TRADITIONAL DELEGATION STRUCTURE (CONT'D)

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Those under 16 years of age may act as a Unified partner. Athletes who are interested in becoming assistant coaches can learn more by visiting [coach.specialolympicsminnesota.org](http://coach.specialolympicsminnesota.org) or contacting the state office.

- Is directly responsible to the head coach
- Is required to have a minimum of Level 1 certification. See the Coaches Certification Program on page 12 for additional information
- Assist with coaching of athletes
- Assist with securing equipment and facilities
- Maintain practice records
- Provide first aid as necessary

## MODEL 2: LOCAL SPORTS MANAGEMENT TEAM STRUCTURE

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A LSMT structure involves a greater number of volunteers in the management of a Delegation, each of whom has a specific responsibility. This is commonly the structure used in larger communities with more athletes and sports offerings and with community-based programs.

### Local Sports Management Team Coordinator (HOD) Responsibilities

- Primary contact with SOMN
- Recruit, direct and evaluate a LSMT
- Recruit coaches for the Delegation
- Conduct effective LSMT meetings
- Develop and implement a plan of action for the LSMT that includes a budget

### Head & Assistant Coaches

See the job responsibilities outlined under the traditional Delegation structure.

### Education Chair Responsibilities

- Develop and implement a two-year training plan that meets the needs of coaches and athletes
- Oversee the implementation of coach certification
- Review and maintain coach rosters and certification records for accuracy
- Respond to interest for new sport(s) offerings

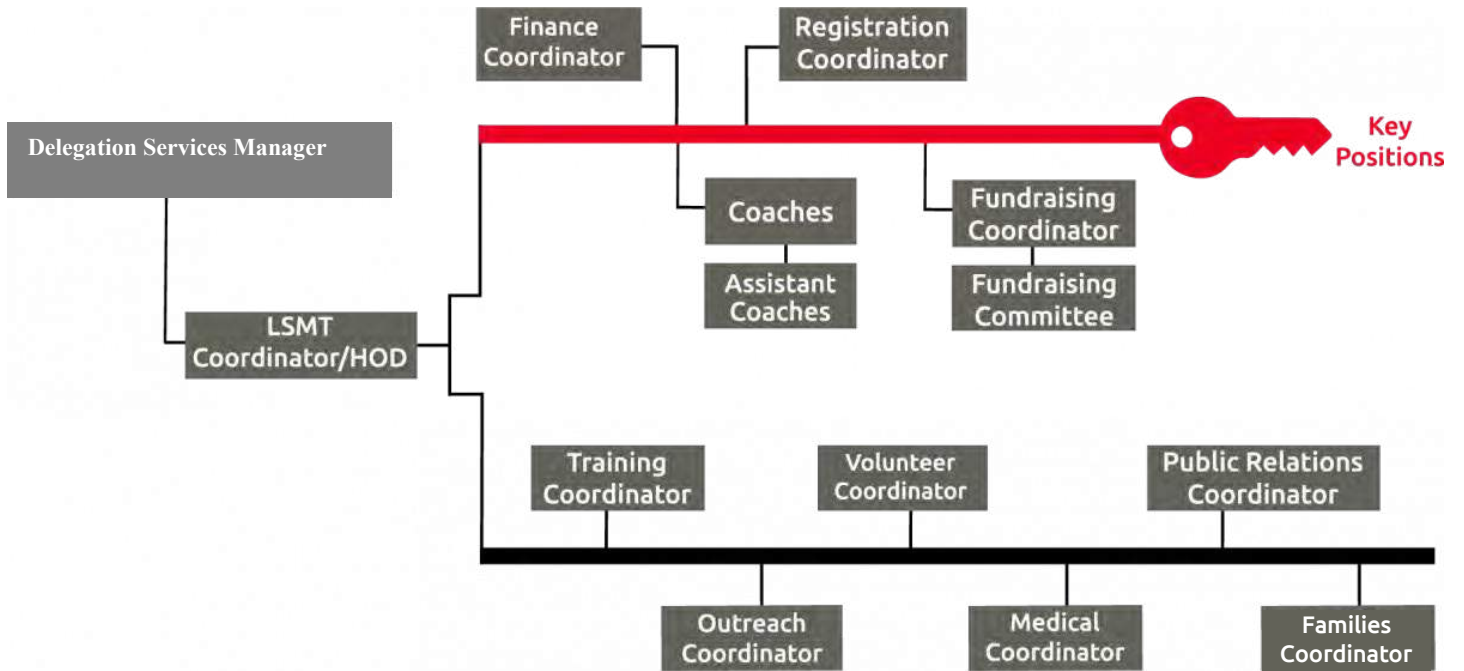
### Families Chair Responsibilities

- Develop and maintain families database
- Identify family members to assist with volunteer needs
- Plan and conduct family orientations
- Represent family interests and provide feedback to LSMT members

### Volunteer Chair Responsibilities

- Develop a plan for recruiting, placing and training all volunteers, including referrals from the SOMN State Office
- Network within the community and organization to establish contacts for volunteers
- Ensure all volunteers are Level 1 certified in coordination with the education chair
- Recruit and train coaches in coordination with education chair
- Develop a recognition system for volunteers

# LOCAL SPORTS MANAGEMENT TEAM ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



# COACHES CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

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## Level 1 Certification Requirements

A coach with a Level 1 Certification can volunteer with any sport.

## Level 1 Certification Requirements

Complete the online Level 1 Training & Volunteer application at <https://specialolympicsminnesota.org/l1volunteer/> (training includes information on General Orientation, Protective Behaviors and Concussion Policies). This training must be updated every three years.

## All coaches working with athletes at a practice or competition must be Level 1 certified.

Once volunteers have a Volunteer Application on file, have had their background screened, and are Level 1 Certified, they will be eligible to coach with SOMN. Contact your Delegation Services Manager for more information.

## Background Check Information

Once a Level 1 Training & Volunteer application has been processed by the State Office, the volunteer will receive an email from noreply@hireright.com with a link to complete their background check. The link will expire after 7 days, so please watch your e-mail and spam accounts. Special Olympics Minnesota will incur the cost of the background check.

Special Olympics Minnesota has taken a firmer stance in regards to volunteer participation at competitions prior to the completion of a background check. This decision was made in the ongoing interest of providing the safest environment we can for our athletes and volunteers. While we realize this is only one tool our organization uses in screening volunteers, background checks provide us the most immediate way of assessing whether an individual meets the basic qualifications of involvement.

We will take the following stances regarding participation and attendance at competitions:

### Coaches

#### Regional Level:

- Coaches who have not initiated the background check process prior to the Errors & Exceptions deadline will be scratched from competition.
- Coaches who have initiated but not passed the background check process prior to the Errors & Exceptions deadline can attend competitions, but cannot be used to fulfill coach ratios.

#### State Level:

- Coaches who do not pass a background check prior to the State Errors & Exceptions deadline will be scratched from competition.

### Unified Partners

- Unified Partners who have not passed a background check prior to the Errors & Exceptions deadline will be scratched from competition, also making them ineligible to advance to a higher level of competition during that sport season.

## Background Check Information (Continued)

### Athletes

#### Regional Level:

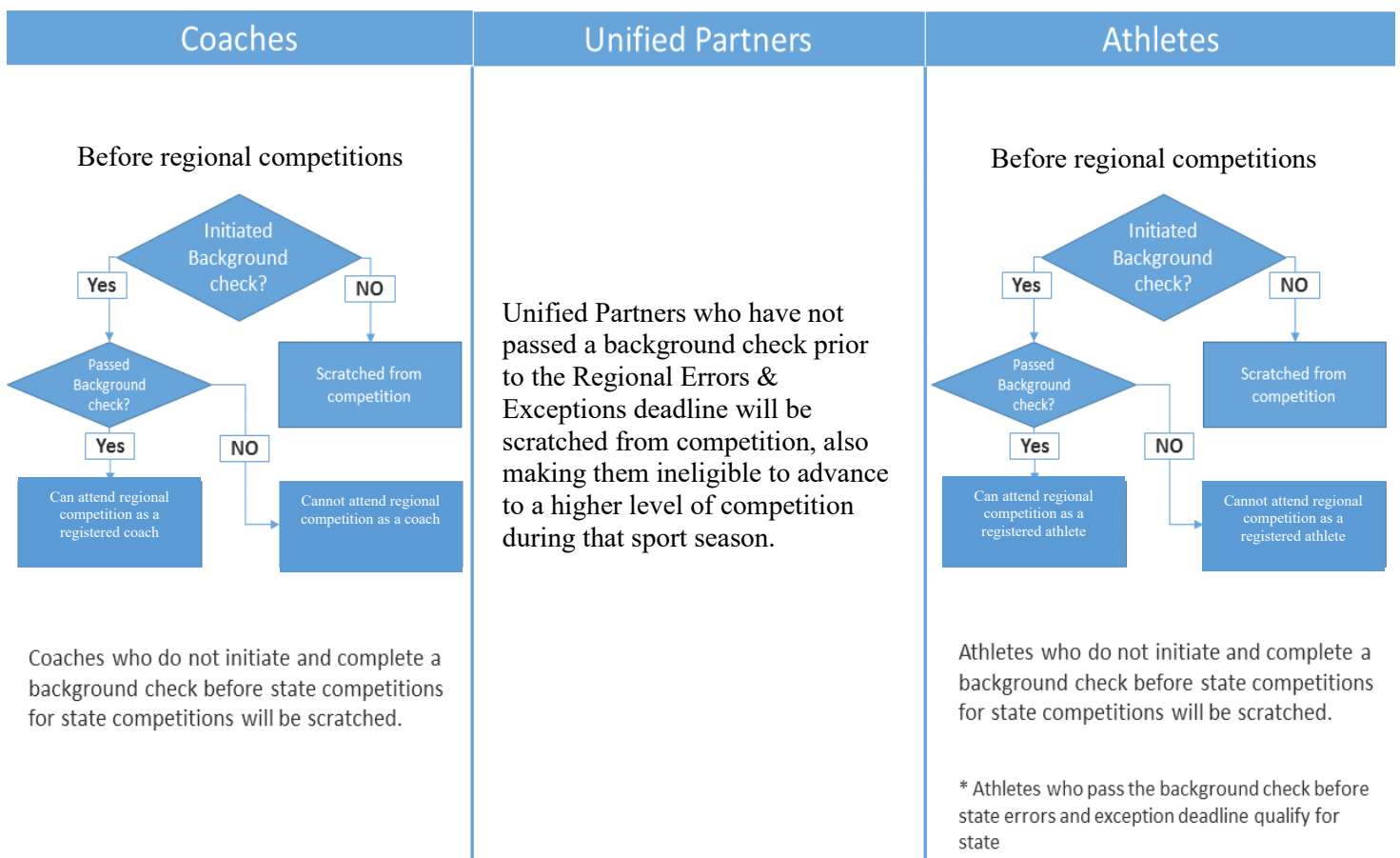
- Athletes who have a criminal history and have not initiated the background check process prior to the Errors & Exceptions deadline will be scratched from competition, also making them ineligible to advance to a higher level of competition during that sport season.
- Athletes who have a criminal history and have initiated but not passed the background check process prior to the Errors & Exceptions deadline cannot attend Regional competitions, but may be eligible to advance to a higher level of competition if results are returned prior to state Errors & Exceptions deadline.

#### State Level:

- Athletes who have not passed a background check prior to the State Errors & Exceptions deadline will be scratched from competition.

Coaches who have questions regarding their background check can contact their delegation or email SOMN at: [coacheducation@somn.org](mailto:coacheducation@somn.org).

Please use the Background Check Flowchart below for reference.



## Level 2 Training

In an effort to continue to offer quality training opportunities to coaches, SOMN will adhere to the following procedures for holding Level 2 training:

- **Online Level 2 Trainings** - available at any time. Coaches and Unified Partners may complete the online trainings at their convenience and complete as many sport specific trainings as they wish.

# COACHES CERTIFICATION PROGRAM (CONT'D)

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## Continuing Education Courses for Recertification

Attend a course and submit a certificate or card. Recertification courses can be **one of (but are not limited to)** the following:

- CPR
- First Aid
- DAPE Course
- Crisis Prevention
- Unified Sports online
- Principles of Coaching
- Unified Sports Training
- Referee/Officiate a Special Olympics event
- Coaching Special Olympics and Athletes online
- Centers for Disease Control - Online Concussion Training
- Other course that apply to working with Special Olympics
- American Sports Education Program (ASEP) Online Training
- Leadership and Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR) Conference
- Continuing Education Courses online or at the Leadership and LETR Conference

For more information on specific courses please visit [somn.org/coach](http://somn.org/coach).

## Coaches Code of Conduct

Special Olympics Minnesota is committed to the highest ideals of sport and expects all coaches to honor sport and Special Olympics. Please find the Coaches Code of Conduct on the SOMN website.

# ATHLETE TRAINING

In a Special Olympics Program, coaches play a unique and indispensable role. It is the coaches who impart to Special Olympics athletes the sports skills and competitive spirit that define the true athlete. Just as professional, collegiate and scholastic athletes work through a pre-season training program into an in-season maintenance training schedule and on to a post-season conditioning program, so it is important for the Special Olympics athlete to embark upon a training program in preparation for competition.

Sports training is designed to improve the participant's physical fitness and skill in various sports. Training programs are developed and directed by an athlete's coach after an individual assessment of that athlete's skills. Through Special Olympics training, an athlete learns the importance of proper warm-up, cool down, and strength and fitness training. Additionally, an athlete improves in sports skills by progressing toward measurable goals at his/her own pace. Proper training reduces sports injuries and increases safety awareness in sports. Finally, as training is required of all athletes, events will match a trained athlete against another trained athlete, thus creating equitable competition.

It is up to each and every one of us associated with SOMN to be sure that athletes receive the necessary and proper training in order to fully achieve the maximum benefit from participation in sports. Within the training and competition structure, the rules of participation and advancement are as follows:

Delegations must train for 8-10 weeks prior to competing at a State Competition.

- Delegations must train a minimum of one hour per week, although we encourage two hours. This may be done during one or more training sessions. Each training session should consist of:
  - Warm-ups and stretching 5-10 minutes
  - Review of previously learned skills 10-20 minutes
  - Introduction of new skills 15-20 minutes
  - Game situations 15-20 minutes
  - Strength and conditioning exercises 10-20 minutes
  - Cool-down 5-10 minutes
- When beginning a training program, all participating Delegations, athletes, coaches and Unified Partners must have the required forms on file at the State Office.
- Coaches are required to utilize a SOMN sports handbook for each sport they coach.
- Special Olympics Minnesota has a Coaches Certification Program which must be followed by all Delegations. See page 12 for more information.
- If planning to participate at the State level, Delegations must attend their Regional Competition if one is offered in that particular sport. Events/teams/levels/rosters for each participant must stay the same from the Regional to the State competition. For sports in which a Regional Competition is not offered, consider:
  - Hosting an Invitational with other nearby teams
  - Arranging scrimmages with other local Delegations; or
  - Setting up a competition atmosphere within one of your training sessions



## ATHLETE TRAINING (CONT'D)

- All Regional and State registration deadlines must be met. The State Office Sports Staff will be able to give you pertinent dates based on the sports in which you are participating and assist you with registration procedures

### Athlete Safety Training

Coaches are responsible for the safety and well-being of athletes during Special Olympics training, competitions and events. The coach is required to bring copies of medical and registration materials to all training sessions and competitions and to be familiar with all medical, medication and dietary precautions or conditions related to athletes under their supervision.

### Suggested Supplies For a Coach's First Aid Kit

2"x2" gauze pads (3-4)	4"x4" gauze pads (3-4)	Tape (1 roll)	Red biohazard bags (3-4)
Hebiclens hand wipes (5-6)	Face shield for CPR (1)	Tampons (1-2)	Latex gloves (8-10 pair)
Small pad of paper and pen	Kling gauze (2)	Ice packs (2)	Band-Aids (10-12)
			Ace wrap (1)

These are the supplies that are needed for any basic and/or minor situation **if the coach is properly trained**. We recommend coaches take a basic first aid course to receive general knowledge and procedures.

### Coach's Injury Treatment Checklist

- Stop play.
- Gloves.
- Remove the athlete from the competition area, unless neck or back injury is suspected. If such an injury has occurred, do not move the athlete and contact 911.
- Treat the wounded area.
- Properly dispose of soiled gauze, towel and/or uniform. (Anything that is saturated with blood or body fluid **MUST** be placed in a biohazard bag).
- Remove your gloves. If soiled with blood or body fluid, place in a biohazard bag.
- **IMMEDIATELY** wash hands with soap and water or towelette.
- If a concussion is suspected, consult the SOMN Concussion Policy on page 46 for correct protocol and return-to-play procedures.
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**NOTE:** The person cleaning the floor or mat **MUST** be gloved. The biohazard bag **MUST** be disposed of in accordance to your institution's biohazard procedures.

## **ATHLETE SAFETY AT COMPETITIONS**

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While attending SOMN competitions, a coach is required to ensure that proper identification is worn by athletes at all times (name tags or credentials). In case of emergency, all hearing impaired and visually impaired athletes should be easily identifiable. It is further recommended that prior to the start of each competition, coaches identify an area at which to meet should an athlete become separated from their Delegation. If an athlete is lost or separated from his or her Delegation for more than 15 minutes, the situation should be reported to security, emergency personnel and SOMN staff immediately.

# RISK MANAGEMENT

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The following are definitions of critical situations:

- **An emergency** is any situation in which immediate action must be taken to avoid injury and/or ensure the safety of those involved in the conduct of practice, transportation or participation in Special Olympics.
- **A serious accident** is any incident in which an athlete, volunteer or staff member has sustained an injury that requires medical attention during conduct of or involvement in Special Olympics.
- **An incident of concern** is any activity or action taken by an individual or individuals, either seen or reported, in which the safety; welfare; or dignity of an athlete, volunteer or staff member is, or appears to be, involved.

With the exception of a public broadcast of an emergency situation such as severe weather or the sounding of a fire alarm, in which coaches are expected to respond according to established safety procedures or instructions provided, the following steps should be taken regarding emergencies, accidents or incidents:

**Step One:** Take all steps necessary to secure medical assistance and limit additional injury, damage or threat to safety.

**Step Two:** Notify State Office.

**Step Three:** Gather the facts from everyone involved, especially all witnesses. Prepare everyone involved to assist in providing additional information, if necessary, by obtaining names, addresses and phone numbers.

**Step Four:** Do not assume that anything is minor or insignificant. Respond to the concerns, fears or reactions of athletes, families and/or volunteers with reassurance and control, but not with assumption or reaction.

**Step Five:** Do not respond to media or non-involved individuals requesting information or evaluation of the situation. Such actions will be the responsibility of SOMN staff and/or your agency's administration.

**Step Six:** Keep in constant contact with State Office in order to give updates about the situation. It may be required for you to complete an incident or accident report form.

**The coach is the athlete's first link to safety and security. The coach must respond with sensitivity and reassurance. All reports of fear, concern or personal safety must be responded to as real.**

# REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE

## What are Some of the Reporting Issues to Consider?

**Confidentiality vs. Good Faith** – Some people are reluctant to get involved in reporting issues, while others are too quick to get involved. Laws protect victims from both of these extremes. Any report made is confidential. Under Minnesota law, the good faith clause protects the reporter when the report may not be valid, as long as the report appears to be made in good faith and not maliciously.

**Child Removed From Home** – In cases of suspected/reported child sexual abuse, the child may be moved from the home to a safe setting. This is not done to punish the child, nor to blame the child, but to protect him/her from a possible recurrence of abuse. In physical abuse cases, children may also be removed when it is believed their lives might be in danger. Usually children remain with their parent or families and other treatments or therapies are used.

**Resources** – Check your Area schools, Red Cross, county welfare departments and libraries for materials or training events about child abuse.

## What is Child Abuse?

Child abuse is the maltreatment of a child by an older person. It includes three categories defined by the law: **1) child neglect; 2) child abuse; 3) child sexual abuse.**

Two distinctions are made within these categories: acts of omission and acts of commission.

**Acts of omission** include the withholding of those things deemed necessary for normal accommodation, i.e. food, shelter, affection, clothing, etc. Child neglect is an act of omission. Children may experience both physical and/or emotional neglect. Examples of neglect might include children who consistently wear clothes inappropriate for weather (i.e., sandals in the winter, no mittens or coat, etc.); a child who may obviously need medical attention but has been given none; a child who receives medication inconsistently; or a child who is left unsupervised at home for long hours. **When examining for neglect, look at the overall quality of care of the child.**

**Acts of commission** are overt acts which injure or assault the child and may even result in death. Child abuse (both physical and emotional) and child sexual abuse are acts of commission. They include the intentional, and sometimes unintentional, bruising, burning, breaking of bones, name calling, bullying or degrading of a child by an older person.

## When Reporting Child Abuse

Suspected child abuse is a confidential matter and those reporting must not discuss their suspicions with anyone except the appropriate agency or individual. Any coach, volunteer or adult involved with Special Olympics who has reason to believe that a Special Olympics athlete is being neglected, physically or sexually abused, shall immediately report that information to the appropriate law enforcement or local protection agency, then to a SOMN staff member. Reporters should not discuss their suspicions with their neighbors, the local nurse, schoolteacher, a relative or anyone other than the designated source. The law is designed to protect the child, the family and the reporter. When you report to the designated source, you are covered by the good faith clause; when you discuss the information inappropriately, you are not protected.

The local protection agency is not required to tell you the outcome of the case. Because of confidentiality and privacy laws, Child Protection is limited in what information it can tell you or others working with the child. Be assured that each county has experience in these areas and will notify everyone they need to inform.

Adult athletes are protected by the **Vulnerable Adult Act of the State of Minnesota**. Suspected abuse or neglect is to be reported immediately. Please contact your local county social services agency.

# CRISIS COMMUNICATION PLAN

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All incidents and accidents/injuries require a completed Accident or Incident Report Form ([coach.specialolympicsminnesota.org/resources/administrative-athlete-forms](http://coach.specialolympicsminnesota.org/resources/administrative-athlete-forms))

If you are reporting an accident or injury for insurance purposes, please complete the Accident Report Form found at [coach.specialolympicsminnesota.org/resources/administrative-athlete-forms](http://coach.specialolympicsminnesota.org/resources/administrative-athlete-forms). Please follow listed instructions on this form carefully.

If you are reporting a violation of the athlete, coach, volunteer or parent and spectator code of conduct please complete the Incident Report Form found at [coach.specialolympicsminnesota.org/resources/administrative-athlete-forms](http://coach.specialolympicsminnesota.org/resources/administrative-athlete-forms). Please follow listed instructions on this form carefully.

Should there be a **serious or fatal** accident or injury, call the 24-hour, seven-day-a-week 800 number: **American Specialty Insurance Group, Inc., Special Olympics Claims Service at 800.566.7941 and notify the SOMN Vice President of Operations at 763-270-7128, ext. 128.**

The following are crisis scenarios which require immediate notification of SOMN. If one or more of the following occurs, please contact the State Office:

- Athlete, family member, volunteer, visitor staff, etc. severely injured or killed
- Severe weather damage or injury (tornadoes, flooding, lightning strikes, etc.)
- Food poisoning as a result of food from a SOMN event
- Car/vehicle accident while in transit to SOMN event
- Athlete or child lost/abducted while at a SOMN event
- Major facilities problem (flooding, loss of electricity, etc.)
- Accusation of mistreatment/crime to/by an athlete from/to a non-athlete
- Crime perpetrated against SOMN or its participants, staff, volunteers
- Scandal involving partner, venue or sponsor
- Crime/improper behavior alleged at SOMN event
- Financial impropriety alleged
- Lawsuit threatened or filed

When contacting the State Office, be prepared to provide the following information when speaking to a staff member or leaving a message:

- Your name
- Your phone number with area code and extension, if applicable
- Name of accident victim
- Name of delegation
- Accident victim phone number with area code and extension, if applicable
- Nature of the accident
- Current status of incident

# **ATHLETE INFORMATION**

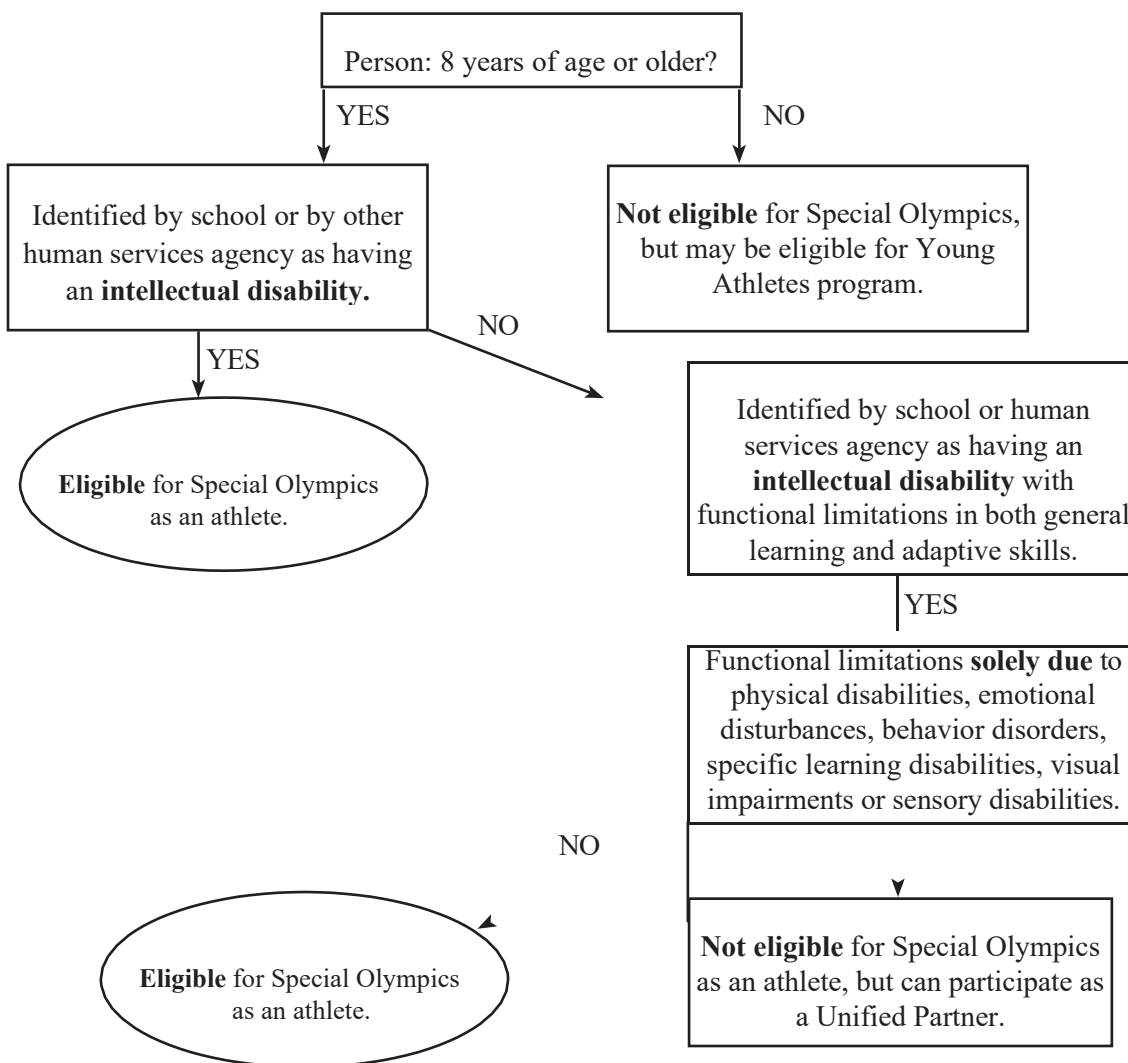
# SPECIAL OLYMPICS ATHLETES

Special Olympics athletes are adults and children with intellectual disabilities, and they are the focus of the work of everyone who is involved in SOMN.

## Eligibility:

Participation in SOMN training and competition is open to all persons with an intellectual disability who meets the age requirements, regardless of the level or degree of that person's disability, and whether or not that person also has physical disabilities, so long as that person registers to participate in SOMN. There is no maximum age limitation for participation in Special Olympics. The minimum age limitation for participation in Special Olympics competitions is eight years of age. Children who are ages 2-7 years old may be permitted to participate in Special Olympics Young Athletes Program and/or specific cultural or social activities (age appropriate) offered during the course of SOMN or Young Athletes events.

## Athlete Eligibility Flowchart



# ELIGIBILITY (CONT'D)

## Identifying Persons with Intellectual Disabilities

A person is considered to have an intellectual disability for purposes of determining eligibility in Special Olympics if that person satisfies any one of the following requirements:

- The person has been identified by an agency or professional as having an intellectual disability as determined by their localities; or
- The person has a cognitive delay, as determined by standardized measures such as intelligence quotient or "IQ" testing or other measures that are generally accepted within the professional community as being a reliable measurement of the existence of a cognitive delay; or
- The person has a closely related developmental disability, defined as functional limitations in both general learning (such as IQ) and in adaptive skills (see AAIDD definition below). However, persons whose functional limitations are based solely on a physical, behavioral or emotional disability, or a specific learning or sensory disability, are not eligible to participate as Special Olympics athletes

## American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) Definition

The American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities definition refers to substantial limitations in present functioning. It is characterized by:

- Significantly subaverage intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with:
- Related limitations in two or more of the following applicable adaptive skill areas:
  - Communication
  - Leisure
  - Self direction
  - Home living
  - Community use
  - Health and safety
  - Functional academics
  - Self care
  - Social skills
  - Work
- Intellectual disabilities manifest before age 18. In addition, some athletes may qualify due to traumatic brain injury after age 18

## Application of the Definition

The American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities has developed four assumptions that are viewed as essential as professionals and consumers begin to use the definition in practice:

- Valid assessment considers cultural and linguistic diversity and differences in communication and behavioral factors
- The existence of limitations in adaptive skills occurs within the context of community environments typical of the individual's age peers and is indexed to the person's individualized needs support
- Specific adaptive limitations often coexist with strengths in other adaptive skills or other personal capabilities

With appropriate supports over a sustained period, the life functioning of the person with intellectual disabilities will generally improve.



## ELIGIBILITY (CONT'D)

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Eligibility for Participation in Special Olympics training and competition is open to every person with intellectual disabilities who is at least eight years of age and who registers to participate in Special Olympics as required by the Special Olympics General Rules.

There is no maximum age limitation for participation in Special Olympics. The minimum age requirement for participants in Special Olympics competition is eight years of age. Children who are at least seven years old may participate in age-appropriate Special Olympics training programs where offered or in specific (and age-appropriate) cultural or social activities offered during the course of a Special Olympics event such as the Young Athletes program which is offered to children between the ages of two to seven. Such children may be recognized for their participation, or through other types of recognition approved by SOI, which are not associated with participation in Special Olympics competition. However, no child may participate in a Special Olympics competition (or be awarded medals or ribbons associated with competition) before his or her eighth birthday.

Participation in Special Olympics is open to all persons with intellectual disabilities regardless of the level or degree of that person's disability, and whether or not that person also has other mental or physical disabilities.

For more information, visit our website at <https://specialolympicsminnesota.org/get-involved/athletes/>

# ATHLETE REGISTRATION

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Each athlete involved in SOMN must be registered at the State Office prior to participating in training or competition. Athlete registration is accomplished through the forms listed below.

**Athlete Application for Participation in Special Olympics:** Also known as an "Athlete Medical," each athlete participating in SOMN must have a current medical form on file at the State Office. **To satisfy insurance requirements, this form must be submitted to the State Office before an athlete begins training.** Once submitted, this form needs to be resubmitted every three years from the medical exam date.

**Special Olympics Athlete Consent Form:** Another form needed on file for each athlete. This form only needs to be completed once, unless the athlete enters SOMN under the age of 18. Athletes younger than 18 should complete a new form once they reach the age of 18. **This form must be submitted to the State Office, along with the Athlete Application, before an athlete begins practicing with the team.**

An updated Special Olympics Athlete Application and Consent form can always be found at [coach.specialolympicsminnesota.org/resources/administrative-athlete-forms](https://coach.specialolympicsminnesota.org/resources/administrative-athlete-forms).

Each Head Coach is responsible for keeping a complete set of athlete medical forms.

# ATHLETE LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

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Special Olympics defines Athlete Leadership Programs (ALPs) as:

- Allowing athletes to choose how and in what role they participate in Special Olympics, such as athlete, coach, volunteer and/or leader.
- Encouraging athletes to take meaningful positions of influence and leadership throughout the organization to help determine policy and set direction.
- Providing training for athletes as they develop their leadership skills in new roles.
- Allowing athletes to explore opportunities for participation in roles previously considered “non-traditional”.

One of the key things to remember when considering getting involved with ALPs is that each athlete needs a Unified Partner who can attend the ALPs training session. Unified Partners can be a friend, teacher, co-worker, coach or family member who would work with the athlete during and after the training to ensure that the skills learned are implemented.

Special Olympics Minnesota offers the Athlete Leadership Program through ALPs University. During the weekend long session, athletes and Unified Partners will be able to select a specific leadership course related to an area of interest. Athletes and Unified Partners will learn, develop skills and apply their knowledge in their teams and communities. General sessions will include guest speakers, learning how to be an athlete representative, the history of ALPs and other pertinent information. ALPs University is offered annually at a Minnesota college or university.

ALPs courses include the following (additional courses are added on an as needed basis):

- Beginning Global Messenger
- Graduate Global Messenger
- Athletes as Ambassadors
- Health & Wellness Ambassadors
- Athletes as Coaches I & II
- Life Skills
- Governance and Leadership 101
- Career Development
- Athletes as Volunteers
- DIFFERbilities in Youth Leadership
- Civic Engagement
- Environmental Leadership

For more information on specific ALPs initiatives, visit [somn.org/alps](https://somn.org/alps) or contact the State Office.

# HEALTH PROGRAMS

Special Olympics Minnesota's Health Programs aims to improve athletes' health and wellness, access to care and empowers athletes to live their healthiest life possible.

SOMN Health Programs are comprised of three initiatives:

1. Healthy Athletes®
2. SOfit
3. Fit 5

## Healthy Athletes®

The mission of Special Olympics Healthy Athletes®, developed in 1996, is to improve athletes' ability to train and compete in Special Olympics. Healthy Athletes is designed to help Special Olympics athletes improve their health and fitness, leading to enhanced sports experience and improved well-being.

The Healthy Athletes initiatives include the following disciplines:

- Special Smiles® - dental
- Opening Eyes® - vision
- Healthy Hearing – hearing
- FUNfitness - exercise, stretching, flexibility and balance
- Health Promotion - nutrition, smoking cessation and sun care
- Fit Feet - podiatry

During a Healthy Athletes® event, Special Olympics athletes receive a variety of free health screenings and services in a series of stations conducted in a welcoming, fun environment. Healthcare professionals and students are trained to provide the screenings in an effort to educate the professional community about the health needs and abilities of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

- Improve access and health care for Special Olympics athletes at event-based health screenings
- Make referrals to local health practitioners when appropriate
- Train health care professionals and students in the health professions about the needs and care of people with intellectual disabilities
- Collect, analyze and disseminate data on the health status and needs of people with intellectual disabilities
- Advocate for improved health policies and programs for persons with intellectual disabilities

Event managers create an environment for positive interaction between health care professionals, other volunteers, SOMN athletes, their families, and caregivers. Products, equipment and cash donations from local, national and international companies help to support the Program. Financial support of governmental and philanthropic sponsors helps the Program grow. Support of the volunteer opportunities offered by Special Olympics Healthy Athletes® provides an ongoing community network for improved access to health care for people with intellectual disabilities, creating a legacy of care.

Athletes, or a designated parent or guardian, must complete a SOMN Healthy Athletes® Consent Form in order to participate in a Healthy Athletes® screening (**the Consent Form is a part of the general Athlete Application**) Athletes can either mail this completed form into the State Office or they can turn it in at the Healthy Athletes®

## HEALTH PROGRAMS (CONT'D)

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### **SOfit**

Special Olympics Minnesota's SOfit health promotion program is a Unified approach to improving and protecting health and wellness for people with and without intellectual disabilities. SOfit offers participants a comprehensive, 360 degree look at wellness and the human spirit. Together, athletes and Unified partners are empowered to challenge and change the way they look at diet, daily exercise and lifestyle choices.

### **SOfit Aims To:**

1. Guide athletes and Unified Partners to healthier lifestyles through increased physical activity and improves daily nutrition.
2. Increase participants' knowledge about physical exercise and food nutrition (including food value, shopping best practices and meal preparation) from pre-program to post-program.
3. Allow participants to experience heightened social engagement and better emotional wellbeing as a by-product of the inclusive nature of the Program.

Learn more about the SOfit Program at [somn.org/sofit](http://somn.org/sofit).

### **Fit 5**

Special Olympics Minnesota wants to make health and wellness more accessible to athletes, partners, and coaches. Fit 5 is a program that's easy to integrate into your existing busy schedule or your team's practice schedule. It's a fitness plan that can improve your health and help you become the best athlete you can be.

Fit 5 includes:

- A plan for physical activity, nutrition and hydration.
- Weekly (5 days of physical activity) and daily (5 fruits and vegetables, 5 bottles of water) recommendations.
- Fitness cards featuring exercises focusing on endurance, flexibility, and strength that can be done at practices, home and the gym.
- An athlete handbook to help follow the program and track progress.

Want to offer Fit 5 at your team's practices? Download a Fit 5 Guide from the SOMN website or visit our website for more information about resources or who to contact: <https://specialolympicsminnesota.org/get-involved/athletes/inclusive-health/fitness/>

# COMPETITION OVERVIEW

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Special Olympics competitions provide a meaningful opportunity for athletes of all ability levels to test their sports skills and measure progress throughout a training period. They also provide an environment through which athletes are challenged and their achievements can be recognized. Adherence to Special Olympics sports rules is critical at all levels of competition so the performance of each athlete is compared to the same standards. Through a process called "divisioning," athletes at all levels of competition are afforded fair competition.

Within Special Olympics, several types of competition are offered, although not all types are offered at each event.

## **Recreational Sports**

Special Olympics Minnesota expands its reach by recognizing and encouraging participation at the local level in a variety of activities that interest the coaches and athletes in your community. Recreational opportunities allow teams to get creative, active and social, while keeping things simple and close to home. Explore options such as dance, cornhole, yoga, walking clubs, pickle ball and so much more!

## **Skills**

Individual Skills are designed for athletes who may not have the readiness to participate in a team sport in a meaningful way. Athletes in this Program are learning basic sports skills and the competition is based on completing a series of skills stations which contribute to developing skills within an otherwise team sport.

## **Traditional Sports**

Special Olympics began with our traditional sports model and to this day the majority of Special Olympics athletes participate in this type of Special Olympics Program. What most people think of when they hear Special Olympics is our traditional sports program, which is comprised of athletes with intellectual disabilities competing in Olympic-style sporting events.

## **Unified Sports®**

Unified Sports® creates an opportunity for people without intellectual disabilities to join in the sports experience by playing on a team with athletes with intellectual disabilities. Unified Sports® combines approximately equal numbers of Special Olympics athletes and athletes without intellectual disabilities (called Unified Partners) on sports teams for training and competition. Age and ability matching of athletes and Unified Partners is defined on a sport-by-sport basis.

## PROCEDURES FOR DIVISIONING

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An athlete's ability is the primary factor in divisioning Special Olympics competition. The ability of an athlete or team is determined by an entry score from a prior competition or is the result of a seeding round or preliminary event at the competition itself. Other factors which are significant in establishing competitive divisions are age and gender.

Ideally, competition is enhanced when all divisions accommodate at least three and no more than eight competitors or teams of similar ability. In some cases, however, the number of athletes or teams within a competition will be insufficient to achieve this goal. The following procedures describe the sequential process for creating equitable divisions by event and also provide guidance for managing athlete participation when factors preclude ideal divisioning. Based upon athlete recommendations from the 1997 Special Olympics Athlete Congress and a 1997 coaches survey, we division by ability first, age second and gender third, when appropriate.

# INDIVIDUAL SPORTS

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## Step One: Divide Athletes by Ability

Follow the guidelines listed below based on the event you are divisioning.

- In events that are measured in time, distance or points:
  - Rank athletes in descending order based upon submitted entry scores.
  - Group as many of these ranked athletes into divisions where the highest and lowest scores are as similar as possible and the number of competitors does not exceed eight
- In events that are judged and where preliminary events will be conducted during the competition:
  - For all athletes within a performance level, rank the athletes in descending order based upon preliminary scores
  - Group as many of these ranked athletes into divisions where the highest and lowest scores are as similar as possible and the number of competitors does not exceed eight
- In events that are judged and where preliminary events will not be conducted during the competition:
  - The nature of judging precludes the use of scores from competition(s) in divisioning. Without scores from preliminary competition, performance level remains as the only criterion of athlete ability
  - For all athletes, identify athletes within each performance level. If more than eight athletes are in the same gender and age group of a performance level, group athletes into divisions of no less than three and no more than eight competitors

## Step Two: Divide Athletes by Age

- An athlete's age group shall be determined by the athlete's age on the opening date of competition
- Divide the athletes into the following age groups: ages 8-11, 12-15, 16-21, 22-29, and ages 30 and older. An additional age group may be established if there are a sufficient number of competitors in the 30 years and older age group
- Athletes shall compete against other athletes within the same age group, or as close to that as possible

## Step Three: Divide Athletes by Gender

To complete the divisioning process, divide athletes into groups based upon gender. Female athletes shall compete against other female athletes and male athletes shall compete against other male athletes whenever possible while maintaining a minimum of three athletes in a division. A relay team which consists of both male and female athletes shall compete in the male division of the competition.

For those individuals who identify as bigender, gender non-conforming, intersex individuals, or other gender identities, SOMN will adhere to the athlete divisioning protocol as outlined in the Special Olympics Sports Rules, which does not rely heavily on gender. In the event that divisioning requires separation by gender, sports divisioning will be based on the participant's expressed gender identity.



# TEAM SPORTS

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## **Step One: Divide Teams by Ability**

All SOMN team sport competitions shall utilize the sports-specific skill assessments, coach rankings and a team's previous tournament results. Special Olympics Minnesota staff use this information to determine a team's division. Refer to the current SOMN sports handbooks for skill assessment and coach ranking forms: [coach.specialolympicsminnesota.org/resources/sport-handbooks-rules](https://coach.specialolympicsminnesota.org/resources/sport-handbooks-rules)

## **Step Two: Divide Teams by Age**

- The age group of a team is determined by the age of the oldest athlete on that team on the opening date of competition
- Divide male and female teams into the following age groups: ages 15 and under, 16-21, and 22 and older. An additional age group may be established if there are a sufficient number of teams in the "22 and older" age group
- Teams should compete against other teams within the same age group whenever possible while maintaining a minimum of three teams per division

## **Step Three: Divide Teams by Gender**

Divide teams into groups based upon gender. Female teams shall compete against other female teams and male teams shall compete against other male teams only when the team has already been appropriately divided for ability and age.

For those individuals who identify as bigender, gender non-conforming, intersex individuals, or other gender identities, SOMN will adhere to the athlete divisioning protocol as outlined in the Special Olympics Sports Rules, which does not rely heavily on gender. In the event that divisioning requires separation by gender, sports divisioning will be based on the participant's expressed gender identity.

# COMPETITION REGISTRATION

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## Steps to Register for Competitions

Complete registration forms via the on-line registration system at <https://services.specialolympicsminnesota.org>. This site requires a user-name and pass code. Please contact the Delegation Services Manager if you have questions about utilizing this site.

Train 8-10 weeks at least one to two hours per week prior to a State Competition.

Compete in one Qualifying Competition prior to State Competition. Athletes **must** compete in the same event/team/level/roster at Qualifying and State Competitions. Athletes advancing to State Competitions **must** compete at a qualifying event if one is offered.

In individual sports, athletes must compete in the same events and/or levels at Qualifying and State Competitions. In team sports, rosters must stay the same between Qualifying and State Competitions. In any sport, athletes who do not have completed paperwork on file at the State Office by the designated Qualifying deadline are not eligible to compete at a State Competition.

Declare intent to participate at a State Competition by requesting quota by designated deadline for each competition and send into the State Office.

Registration information for State Competitions will be sent to the Head of Delegation by the State Office. Registrations must be completed through the online registration website by the outlined deadlines. To ensure that all athletes who want to participate are entered correctly, the registration process needs to be completed properly by all Delegations.

## Timeline for Paperwork

All registrations and paperwork must be completed by the competition deadlines outlined by the State Office. These deadlines will be communicated via email to all HODs.

After your Qualifying Competition is complete, you will need to advance your athletes to State through the online registration website.

Athletes and unified partners whose **medicals are not submitted by the Qualifying deadline** cannot advance to State Competitions.

# FINANCES/CENTRALIZED ACCOUNTING

## Authorizing Persons

- **A Financial Responsibility Form** must be completed for all Delegations.
- The Financial Responsibility Form will also be required for documenting **all** changes in Delegation financial responsibility. It can be found on our website at **[coach.specialolympicsminnesota.org/resources/financial-fundraising-forms](http://coach.specialolympicsminnesota.org/resources/financial-fundraising-forms)**
- Financial Responsibility forms should be signed both by the person responsible for Delegation finances, as well as the Head of Delegation.
- For internal control purposes, the Head of Delegation should not be the same person handling the Delegation finances. (*This may not be possible for small Delegations with no Local Sports Management Team structure in place.*)
- Payment requests and funds transfers **must** be approved by the Finance Chair - the person responsible for keeping the Delegation's financial information.

## Payment Requests

Delegations may have purchases paid for out of their centralized account by submitting an invoice to the State Office accompanied by a **Check Request/Expense Report Form**. This can be found on our website at **[coach.specialolympicsminnesota.org/resources/financial-fundraising-forms](http://coach.specialolympicsminnesota.org/resources/financial-fundraising-forms)** (*This form may also be used to request reimbursement for expenses incurred on behalf of the Delegation.*)

- Insert your five-character Delegation code on the top left box, e.g. 01XYZ
- Fill out the vendor name and address, the invoice date, total amount of the purchase, the description and who is making the request.
- Check the appropriate box on the top right.
- All payment requests should be approved by the authorizing person recognized by the State Office.
- Attach **originals** of all relevant documentation to the payment request.
- Requests for expense reimbursement must be submitted within **60 days** of the actual expense.
- Requests that have not been completed correctly or approved by the authorized person will not be processed.
- Payment of requests is subject to availability of funds in the Delegation central account.
- Payments are made by the State Office every Wednesday.
- Payment requests should reach the State Office by Tuesday to be included in the week's check run.

## FINANCES/CENTRALIZED ACCOUNTING (CONT'D)

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### Cash Advances

A Delegations may request for a Cash Advance when a number of expenses are expected to occur in a short period of time and/or when there is not enough notice as to the pending expense for the State Office to make payment directly to the vendor. All advance requests should be submitted on a **Check Request/Expense Report Form** at least two weeks prior to the date needed. This form can be found on our website at [coach.specialolympicsminnesota.org/resources/financial-fundraising-forms](http://coach.specialolympicsminnesota.org/resources/financial-fundraising-forms)

- Insert your five-character Delegation code on the top left box, e.g. 01XYZ
- Fill out the vendor name and address, the invoice date, total amount of the purchase, the description and who is making the request.
- Check the appropriate box on the top right i.e. Cash Advance.
- All cash advances must be accounted for within **30 days** of the request. Checking the "No Check Required" box on the top right, list all payments made using the funds and attach all the relevant receipts and/or invoices. Any balance should be returned to the central account.
- Delegations will be allowed only one outstanding advance at any time. Advance requests received from a Delegation with a previously issued outstanding advance will be denied.
- Requests for cash advances should be approved by the authorizing person recognized by the State Office.
- Incomplete advance requests will not be processed.
- Be sure to keep a copy of the completed form for your records, noting the date you are forwarding it to the State Office.

### Revenue Deposits

Use the Revenue Report Form to record all funds to the State Office for deposit into your central account. This form can be found on our website at [coach.specialolympicsminnesota.org/resources/financial-fundraising-forms](http://coach.specialolympicsminnesota.org/resources/financial-fundraising-forms)

- Insert your five-character Delegation code on the top left box, e.g. 01XYZ
- The revenue should be classified by the specific sources on the revenue report, i.e. Individual Donations, Corporate Donations, Civic Service Donations, etc.
- Be sure to keep a copy of the completed form for your records, noting the date that you are forwarding it to the State Office.

## FINANCES/CENTRALIZED ACCOUNTING (CONT'D)

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### Mileage Reimbursement

If Delegation reimburse mileage, please use and full complete the **Mileage Reimbursement Form** for documentation. This can be found on our website at

[coach.specialolympicsminnesota.org/resources/financial-fundraising-forms](http://coach.specialolympicsminnesota.org/resources/financial-fundraising-forms)

- It is up to each individual delegation to determine if they are in a position to offer mileage reimbursement to volunteers as this reimbursement is expensed to the delegations account.
- Insert your five-character Delegation code on the top left box, e.g. 01XYZ
- The reimbursement rate to be used is the IRS standard rate for persons providing services to charitable organizations. The current rate is **14 cents per mile**. This rate can be found at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) and may change from year to year.
- Mileage reimbursement requests **must** have beginning and ending odometer readings.
- Reimbursements can **not** be made for volunteer gas purchases. Volunteers should use the **Mileage Reimbursement Form** instead.
- Requests should be approved by the authorizing person recognized by the State Office.
- Incomplete advance requests will not be processed.
- Be sure to keep a copy of the completed form for your records, noting the date that you are forwarding it to the State Office.

### State Tournament Fees

Tournament fees will be recovered from the Delegation central account based on the delegation's registration numbers. Any cash/checks received towards these fees will be deposited into the central account.

# FUNDRAISING

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**All fundraising projects must be submitted for review and must adhere to the following timeline:**

- **Up to 45 days before project:** The project coordinator (person conducting the fundraiser) submits application to his/her Delegation Services Manager for approval.
- **Within five (5) working days:** the Delegation Services Manager will review the application for accuracy\*. If approved, the Delegation Services Manager will submit signed application to the Vice President of Development for approval.
- **Within five (5) working days:** The Vice President of Development approves/disapproves\* request and remits copy of application to Delegation Services Manager and project coordinator.
- **Within 45 days after Project:** The project coordinator submits their "Fundraising Report" to the Delegation Services Manager.

**\*Note: it is recommended that only 30 percent or less of income generated annually should be spent for costs incurred to raise funds. All 501(c)(3) nonprofits must adhere to this revenue/expenditure ratio.**

\*The State Office will review the application and work with the local Program to ensure the development of an effective and profitable fundraising project. In compliance with state, federal and Special Olympics, Inc. rules and regulations, any use of the Special Olympics name and logo must have prior approval from Special Olympics Minnesota (Special Olympics Minnesota Use of Logo Application can be found on the website). The intent of the application is to cultivate a coordinated fundraising effort between the local and state programs as well as to ensure the proposed project is productive, legal and safe.

The Fundraising Project Application can be found at  
[coach.specialolympicsminnesota.org/resources/financial-fundraising-forms](https://coach.specialolympicsminnesota.org/resources/financial-fundraising-forms)

## WEBSITE CONTENT

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The HOD Portal contains valuable resources and information for coaches, athletes, families and more. Here are a few documents you can find on the HOD Portal:

1. Athlete Code of Conduct
2. Dating Policy
3. Coaches Code of Conduct
4. Volunteer Code of Conduct
5. Parent and Spectator Code of Conduct
6. Logo Usage Guidelines
7. Participant Screening Policy

# APPENDIX



## COMPETITION CANCELLATION POLICY

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In support of the Special Olympics mission to provide year-round sports training and competition opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities, SOMN strongly advocates the development and implementation of a comprehensive, year-round competition calendar which provides competitive opportunities to athletes at the Regional and State levels. It is our belief that each competitive experience offers athletes the opportunity to improve sport skills, gain confidence in their abilities and showcase the results of their training.

Therefore, it is the policy of SOMN that all Competitions be conducted as scheduled, with the primary exception being the presence of weather-related conditions that pose risks to the safety and health of athletes and volunteers, such as heavy rain, lightning, extreme cold or extreme heat. In these instances, it will be at the discretion and best judgment of event organizers to delay, postpone or cancel competition.

## TOBACCO, DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY

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Smoking, second-hand smoke and use of tobacco products are known health hazards, therefore SOMN abides by a no tobacco use policy during all SOMN sports training, practices, competitions, events for all athletes, coaches, family members, chaperones, volunteers and staff. This policy includes e-cigarettes.

All SOMN officials, delegates, coaches, volunteers and athletes will adhere to the following policy concerning drugs, alcohol and other performance enhancing substances:

"In Special Olympics Minnesota, any medication or drug prescribed by a licensed physician for use by a SOMN official, delegate, coach, volunteer or athlete under his or her medical care to deal with a diagnosed condition is permitted, provided that such medication or drug is used for the specific treatment of that condition. In the absence of any medical prescription, local law shall prevail and be strictly enforced.

In the case of SOMN athletes, any medication or drug which is used solely or primarily for improving the performance of an athlete in Special Olympics competition is strictly prohibited.

Under no circumstances may a SOMN official, delegate, coach, volunteer or athlete consume alcoholic beverages within the confines of a Special Olympics venue, stadium, competition, training site or event before or during any Special Olympics competition or training.

A coach or chaperone must be available to supervise athletes from the time of departure until the time of return from training, competitions and events regardless of the competition or housing site. Athletes need to be informed as to who the responsible person is at any given time. All coaches and chaperones are subject to, at least, an eight-hour abstinence from drinking prior to the time they are responsible for athletes at training, competitions and events. At no time or under any circumstances shall coaches and chaperones consume alcohol in the presence of athletes.

Violation of this policy may result in the exclusion of the individual or Delegation from the official event, games or training session."

## HOUSING POLICY

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While in attendance at SOMN events that require an overnight stay, SOMN requires delegations to secure housing arrangements that provide one bed per person. It will be the responsibility of each coach to make housing reservations directly with the hotels for members of their delegation. When making housing reservations, coaches and parents must keep in mind a high level of safety and security of the athletes.

Unless otherwise stated in the tournament registration material, SOMN shall be responsible for housing reservations at such time a competition or tournament is held on the campus of a university or college and the residence halls of that institution are being utilized.

# RECREATIONAL SWIMMING POLICY

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Protecting the health and safety of all people engaged in Special Olympics programs, events and activities is a high priority for Special Olympics Minnesota (“SOMN”). A leading cause of death and serious injury amongst Special Olympics athletes since the mid-1970s has been recreational swimming; therefore, the Special Olympics U.S. Risk Management & Insurance Task Force, with input from U.S. state Special Olympics Programs, has created a recreational swimming policy which SOMN has adopted.

## **What does this policy cover?**

Athletes (including Young Athletes), Unified partners, managers, coaches, officials, chaperones, supervisors, fundraising participants and other volunteers — collectively, all SOMN “participants.”

## **What is allowed?**

Training and competition in swimming or other official Special Olympics sports SOMN may offer in the future; participation in SOMN Polar Plunge events.

## **What is not allowed?**

Recreational swimming and water-based activities which Participants may engage in while at a SOMN event, SOMN practice, during travel or to or from any SOMN event or practice, or while under the supervision of a SOMN staff member or registered volunteer, such as during down times between competitive events for an SOMN competition.

This may include, but is not limited to, swimming in pools (regardless of whether lifeguards are on duty), lakes, oceans, rivers, or other bodies of water; visiting and using facilities at water parks; and using hot tubs or similar. Participants must refrain from such activities even when not training and competing, but under the supervision of their delegation, such as when staying at hotels for SOMN competitions.

SOMN delegations may not sponsor or organize events which includes such activities, such as trips to pools or water parks, whether connected with an SOMN competition or not.

Violation of this policy could lead to disqualification from competition, being sent home from training, competition or activity at the expense of the violating party, temporary suspension or in some cases permanent suspension.

# CONCUSSION AWARENESS & SAFETY RECOGNITION POLICY

## Objective

It is Special Olympics' intent to take steps to help ensure the health and safety of all Special Olympics participants. All Special Olympics participants should remember that safety comes first and should take reasonable steps to help minimize the risks for concussion or other serious brain injuries.

## Defining a Concussion

A concussion is defined by the Centers for Disease Control as a type of traumatic brain injury caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head as well as serial, cumulative hits to the head. Concussions can also occur from a blow to the body that causes the head and brain to move quickly back and forth--causing the brain to bounce around or twist within the skull. Although concussions are usually not life-threatening, their effects can be serious and therefore proper attention must be paid to individuals suspected of sustaining a concussion.

## Suspected or Confirmed Concussion

A participant who is suspected of sustaining a concussion in a practice, play or competition due to a suspected concussion may not participate in Special Olympics sports activities until either of the following occurs (1) at least seven (7) consecutive days have passed since the participant was removed from play and a currently licensed, qualified medical professional provides written clearance for the participant to return to practice, play and competition or (2) a currently licensed, qualified medical professional determines that the participant did not suffer a concussion and provides written clearance for the participant to return to practice play immediately. Written clearance in either of the scenarios above shall become a **permanent record**.

## Required Training and Timeline

All coaches are required to complete concussion awareness training, which is a part of the Level I Coaches Certification training program.

For coaches registering for the first time on or after January 1, 2015, confirmation of such training must be provided to SOMN prior to the individual beginning volunteer duties. It is the responsibility of SOMN to implement a system of tracking completion of the concussion awareness training by coaches.

## Frequency of Training

Concussion awareness training must be completed by all coaches at least once every three years.

## Communication with Guardians

SOMN is required to communicate in writing to all participants and parents and/or guardians, the concussion awareness and safety recognition program, as outlined in the Suspected or Confirmed and Return to Play sections of this policy.

The CDC website <https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/index.html> provides additional resources relative to concussions that may be interest to participants and their families.

## PRIVACY & DATA SECURITY POLICY

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I understand that Special Olympics Minnesota will be collecting my personal information as part of my participation, including my name, image, address, telephone number, health information, and other personally identifying and health-related information I provide to Special Olympics ("personal information").

I agree and consent to Special Olympics Minnesota:

- using my personal information in order to: make sure I am eligible and can participate safely; run trainings and events; share competition results (including on the web and in news media); provide health treatment if I participate in a health program; analyze data for the purposes of improving programming and identifying and responding to the needs of Special Olympics participants; perform computer operations, quality assurance, testing, and other related activities; and provide event-related services.
- using my personal information for communications and marketing purposes, including direct digital marketing through email, text message, and social media.
- sharing my personal information with (i) researchers, such as universities and public health agencies that are studying intellectual disabilities and the impact of Special Olympics activities, (ii) medical professionals in an emergency, and (iii) government authorities for the purpose of assisting me with any visas required for international travel to Special Olympics events and for any other purpose necessary to protect public safety, respond to government requests, and report information as required by law.
- I have the right to ask to see my personal information or to be informed about the personal information that is processed about me. I have the right to ask to correct and delete my personal information, and to restrict the processing of my personal information if it is inconsistent with this consent.
- in the course of volunteering for Special Olympics, I may be dealing with confidential information and I agree to keep said information in the strictest confidence.
- personal information may be used and shared consistent with this guide and as further explained in the Special Olympics Privacy Policy at: [www.specialolympics.org/privacy-policy](http://www.specialolympics.org/privacy-policy).

## FIFTEEN-PASSENGER VAN TRANSPORTATION NOTICE

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Special Olympics Programs are prohibited from using 15-passenger vans to transport athletes or other individuals to and from Special Olympics events, and Special Olympics strongly discourages other organizations from using 15-passenger vans to transport people to or from Special Olympics events.

Special Olympics recognizes that it is up to each non-Special Olympics organization to determine whether to use 15-passenger vans. By using 15-passenger vans, a non-Special Olympics organization understands that:

1. Anyone operating a 15-passenger van owned by a non-Special Olympics organization for the purpose of transporting Special Olympics athletes or other persons to or from Special Olympics activities is acting as the employee or volunteer of the organization and not on behalf of Special Olympics
2. The driver's operation of the 15-passenger van will be considered to be in the course and scope of the driver's employment for or volunteer responsibilities for the non-Special Olympics organization, and not for or on behalf of Special Olympics
3. Non-Special Olympics organizations that operate 15-passenger vans should comply with the applicable safety standards promulgated by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)

## CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENTS

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Only SOMN staff members are authorized to sign written contracts on behalf of SOMN. All written contracts for facilities and/or services at the local or area level that are entered into on behalf of SOMN, no matter how large or small, including agreements between Delegations or Areas and third parties, must be forwarded to the Vice President of Operations ([greg.vanselow@somn.org](mailto:greg.vanselow@somn.org)) or the Vice President of Finance ([melissa.holmes@somn.org](mailto:melissa.holmes@somn.org)) for approval. As part of our approval process, we also include our insurance carrier when appropriate. This process is designed to ensure no one in our organization enters into a contract that is not in the best interest of SOMN, allows appropriate transfers of risk to be negotiated and removes you as a volunteer from any contractual liability.

A contract is an agreement between two or more legally competent parties, enforceable by law, to supply goods or perform work. The agreement must contain an exchange of value (consideration), which is usually money. For example, in exchange for the use of a facility, the facility owner requests certain consideration, often monetary in nature. A contract differs from a reservation in that a contract will often contain provisions containing one or more of the following phrases: proof or certificate of insurance, cancellation policy, hold harmless, indemnification or negligence.

If you are in doubt of whether a document constitutes a contract, please send it to the State Office for review. Most contracts entered into at the local and Area level will be program-related and should be directed to the Vice President of Operations or the Vice President of Finance.