



SPECIAL OLYMPICS Maryland – Montgomery County (SOMO) RECREATIONAL SWIMMING POLICY

It is Special Olympics' intent to take steps to ensure the health and safety of all Special Olympics participants. Special Olympics participants should always remember that safety comes first and should take reasonable steps to help minimize the risks for injury or accidental drowning related to recreational swimming. By way of history, recreational swimming has been a leading cause of death or serious injury in Special Olympics, amongst athletes, dating back to the mid-1970s.

POLICY STATEMENT

Special Olympics Maryland – Montgomery County (SOMO) has determined for the health and welfare of its participants, (athletes, coaches, unified partners and chaperones) to prohibit recreational swimming at any time while under the auspices of Special Olympics. This applies not only to the time at Special Olympics competitions or activities, but also while in transit to/from Special Olympics competitions or activities.

DEFINING RECREATIONAL SWIMMING

Recreational Swimming is any swimming or swimming-like activities that occur outside of sanctioned Special Olympics swimming or water-based sports (kayaking, canoeing, stand up paddle boarding) training or competition. Examples of recreational swimming would 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 delegations' "down time" during a Special Olympics training, completion, 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.

APPLICABILITY

This policy is in effect from the time the participant comes under the supervision or purview of SOMO for a practice, competition or activity to the time they are no longer under the care or purview of SOMO for said practice, completion or activity. This policy applies to all programs within SOMO. There will be no exceptions.

FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH RECREATIONAL SWIMMING POLICY

Any participant found in violation of this policy is subject to potential repercussions including but not limited to disqualification from competition, being sent home from training, competition, or activity at their or their legal guardian's expense, temporary suspension or permanent suspension. Any individual that knowingly allows recreational swimming to take place or fails to report it to the appropriate individual (coach, HOD, SOMO Staff and volunteers), is subject to the repercussions previously listed.

Any area/local program involved in the infraction will not be allowed to stay at a facility (hotel) with a pool at the next state event. This includes all athletes, teams, etc. from that program (area/local). Any coach/chaperone not adhering to this policy will be subject to a Code of Conduct review.

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

This policy shall be communicated to all Athletes, Unified Partners, Coaches, Volunteers, Parents and Guardians. A written copy of this policy shall be furnished by SOMO upon request.