

SPECIAL OLYMPICS NORTH DAKOTA (SOND) 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 North Dakota (SOND) has determined for the health and welfare of its participants, 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 SOND for a practice, competition or activity to the time they are no longer under the care or purview of SOND for said practice, completion or activity. This policy applies to all programs within SOND. 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, SOND 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 SOND upon request.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS RECREATIONAL SWIMMING FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Can an athlete participate in recreational swimming if under the supervision of their parent/guardian?

Only if the parent or guardian has signed a SOND waiver and release of liability, removes the athlete from the delegation, and takes full responsibility for the athlete. At that point, the athlete is no longer under the auspices of Special Olympics North Dakota. The recreational swimming may not take place in the same location or in the presence of other Special Olympics athletes. Upon return of the athlete to the Special Olympics training, competition or activity, the parent/guardian shall notify the coach or HOD and SOND recreational swimming policy is in force. This exception is subject to the approval of the HOD and must be approved at least 24 hours in advance.

2. Does this policy apply to non-athletes (coaches, partners, volunteers, staff)

Yes. Any individual under the auspices of Special Olympics must abide by this policy. Coaches, partners, volunteers and staff provide leadership and set the example for our athletes. They are required to comply.

3. If an athlete is training, competing or engaging in an activity with a state or jurisdiction with a conflicting policy, what should he/she do?

The SOND policy is in full force even if the athlete is supervised by a Special Olympics coach or chaperone operating under a different policy. Direction to abandon SOND policy and comply with a conflicting state policy may only be granted by the SOND President/CEO.

4. What are examples of recreational Swimming?

Examples 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, 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.