



**Policy:** Recreational Swimming Policy

**Date:** January 21, 2019

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The Special Olympics U.S. Risk Management & Insurance Task Force (RMITF), with input from US Programs, has created the following recreational swimming guidance for use by U.S. Programs.

### **Objective**

It is always 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-1970's. Recommendations were made in the early 1980's to Programs (by SOI) to examine this issue and take steps to address recreational swimming. Many U.S. Programs have since created their own recreational swimming policies over the years.

To ensure a level of consistency, and in the ongoing interest of ensuring the safety of all participants, Special Olympics Arkansas Board of Directors approves the RMITF and Special Olympics is providing this policy

### **What is Considered Recreational Swimming?**

Recreational swimming is any swimming or swimming-like activities that occurs outside of sanctioned Special Olympics swimming or water-based sports (sailing, kayaking, canoeing, stand up paddle boarding) training or competition.

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, unified partner or volunteer; 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.

## **Special Olympics Arkansas Recreational Swimming Policy**

Special Olympics Arkansas Board of Directors adopted the Recreational Swimming policy to ensure the health and safety of all participants during events and competitions, particularly hotel swimming pools. Special Olympics Arkansas believes in an inclusive and safe environment for all participants including but not limited athletes, coaches, unified partners and volunteers.

Special Olympics ARKANSAS has determined, for the health and welfare of all 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.

Any such exceptions must comply with the “Safety Considerations” found in Section 5 of Special Olympics’ Swimming Rules.

Potential repercussions could include disqualification from competition; being sent home from training, competition or activity; possible temporary or permanent suspension.