



# Emergency Action Plan Guidance

Revised August 2023

## **Emergency Action Plan**

An emergency is a significant disruption, which has the potential to stimulate extensive news media coverage and public scrutiny that interferes with the organization's normal business activities. An emergency may have one or more of the following elements: occur suddenly; demands quick response; interferes with organizational performance; creates uncertainty and stress; threatens the reputation, assets and bottom-line of the organization; escalates in intensity; causes outsiders to scrutinize the organization; and permanently alters the organization.

An emergency may be, but is not limited to, any of the following:

- Any loss of life for any reason (including natural causes) of any athlete, coach, volunteer, spectator, staff member or conference attendee.
- Any accident or injury posing potential loss of life.
- Any accident involving multiple people (bus accident, etc.).
- Any athlete missing for more than two hours.
- Any severe weather situation that may result in serious injury or property damage.
- Any large-scale disaster, whether by natural causes (e.g., hurricane) or other (e.g., terrorist activity).
- Any criminal action of an athlete, coach, volunteer or staff member.
- Any significant or suspected significant injury resulting in need of immediate emergency care and/or transportation to the local emergency center.

### **Communication**

Area programs should develop a communication plan and determine who on the council is part of the Emergency Action Plan Team (EAP Team). The EAP Team should decide on the immediate action needed and consult with their SOVA Region Director on next steps.

Under no circumstances should volunteers, staff, council members or persons other than SOVA's President, SOVA's Chairman of the Board of Directors or SOVA's Vice President of Development and Communications make a statement to the media in the event of a catastrophe, death or related emergency.

Should an event like this happen, you may be approached by a media representative for a reaction or statement. Keep the following suggestions in mind if you are approached for a comment, and refer all inquiries to a Special Olympics Virginia staff member.

- Remember, the welfare of the athletes, families and volunteers always come first.
- Concentrate. Think before speaking.
- Never say "no comment" or "go off the record."
- If you are asked what happened, say you do not know.
- Never speculate or answer "what ifs."

## **Serious Injury, Loss of Life, Multiple Person Incidents:**

Most injuries sustained during sports are relatively minor. However, potential limb-threatening or life-threatening emergencies in sports or during transportation to and from events are unpredictable and occur without warning. Proper management of these situations is critical to minimize risk to the injured participants and to the organization. Having an emergency plan in place helps volunteers react quickly and responsibly to a crisis.

Each local program should develop and implement a written emergency plan. There is a template included in this document for assistance in designating volunteers to specific roles. Components of the emergency plan include:

- What equipment (first aid kit, AED) is available to respond to an emergency?
- What personnel onsite are involved and what are their roles?
  - Who will call 911 and meet emergency personnel at the facility entrance? This person should be prepared to provide the information below:
    - Name, address, telephone number of caller
    - Number of victims and their condition
    - First-aid treatment initiated
    - Specific directions to the scene
    - Other information requested by the dispatcher
    - Do not hang-up until the dispatchers tells you to do so!
  - Who will attend to the injured participant(s) and provide appropriate emergency care until EMS personnel arrive? When EMS personnel arrive, provide pertinent information (method of injury, vital signs, treatment rendered, medical history) and assist with emergency care as needed.
  - Who will attend to the uninjured participants?
  - Who will provide EMS personnel with injured athletes' medical forms?
- After the initial emergency response:
  - Who will notify participants' emergency contacts about what happened and where injured individuals were transported?
  - Who will notify Area leadership and SOVA staff?
  - Who will record the actions taken during the emergency and submit an Incident Report Form to SOVA?

## **Best Practices Prior to Every Sport Practice and Competition**

Coaches can limit injuries and be prepared in the case of a crisis by following the actions below:

- Inspect the practice/competition area and make sure there are no unsafe areas on the field of play that present a dangerous situation (sprinkler heads, holes in the field, equipment that hasn't been picked up, chairs/tables too close to the field of play, wet spots, etc.).
- Have copies of your athlete's registration packet onsite including their contact information, release forms and medical forms. Keep this information in a secure place but accessible during practices and games.
- Ensure your equipment and event supplies are safe and in good working order.
- Ensure participants wear their protective equipment (shin guards, mouth guards, etc.) and that it is properly adjusted and in good condition.
- Analyze what emergency and first aid equipment are available. Have a basic first aid kit on site and access to an AED if possible.
- Follow concussion protocols and err on the side of caution in the event an athlete/partner suffers a blow to the head. If in doubt sit them out.
- Review your emergency plan with key volunteers prior to the first practice.

## **Severe Weather Situations**

Outdoor sports coaches should have a severe weather plan and consult a local weather app to identify weather threats near their practice or competition. If a severe weather threat is likely, the coach should suspend practice and have all participants move indoors if possible or seek shelter in vehicles.

### **Lightning**

Lightning is consistently one of the top three causes of weather-related deaths in the United States. Area programs should include lightning procedures in their Emergency Action Plans.

Coaches can use a weather app such as Weatherbug (the Spark feature) to receive accurate lightning detection and distance information. An alternative is to use the flash-to-bang method. Begin counting on the lightning flash and stop counting when the associated clap of thunder is heard. When the flash-to-bang ratio is 50 seconds or less, lightning is within 10 miles. Coaches should do the following:

**Suspend Play:** A flash-to-bang count of 50 seconds or less requires outdoor activities and certain indoor activities such as swimming to be suspended. Individuals should evacuate the premises and seek shelter indoors if possible or in vehicles.

**Resume Play:** Once play is suspended, activity should not resume until 30 minutes after the last lightning flash is seen or thunder is heard.

Unsafe locations during a lightning storm include picnic shelters, sun shelters, bus shelters, storage sheds, open areas, tents, dugouts, refreshment stands, screened in porches, press boxes and open garages.

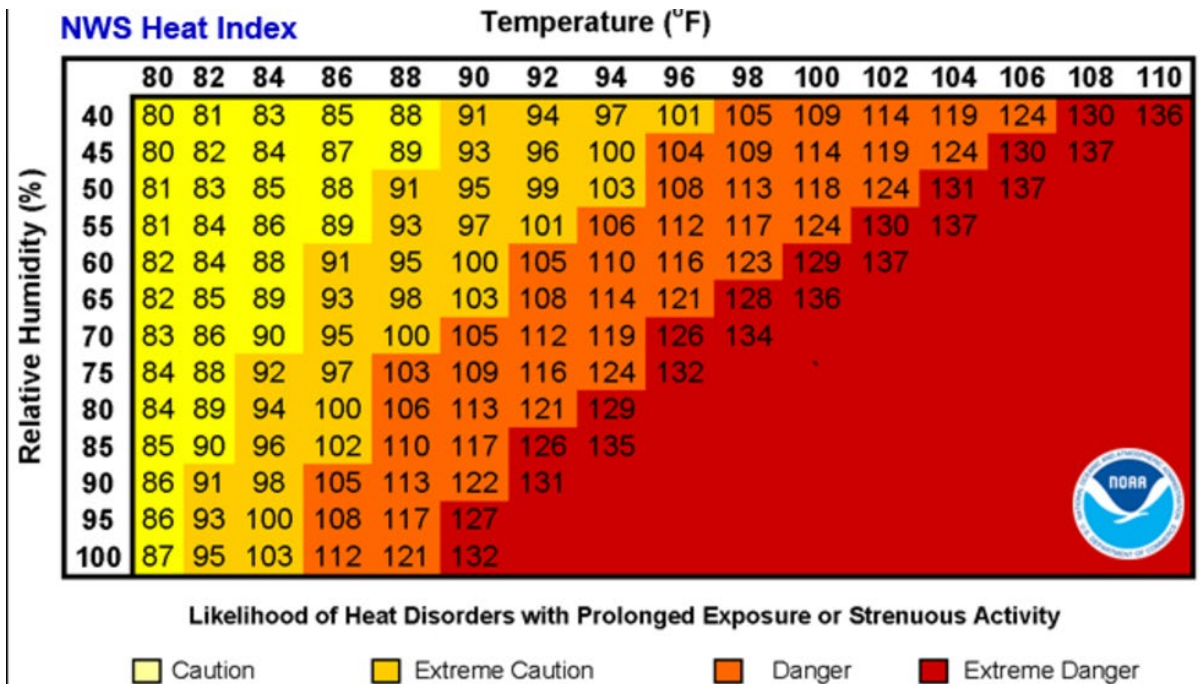
## Hot and Humid Weather

Coaches should measure temperature and humidity by utilizing a sling psychrometer. If this device is not available, use a weather app to determine current temperature and humidity levels.

Use the wet bulb globe temperature (WBGT) guidelines below to determine if it is safe to practice and compete. The WBGT levels also apply to venues without air conditioning.

WBGT Readings	Recommendations
< 27.8° C (<82° F)	Risk is very low. Full activity.
30.5 -32.2° C (82 -86.9° F)	Risk is moderate. Coaches should remind athletes and volunteers to drink plenty of water and seek shelter indoors when possible.
32.2 -33.3° C (90 – 92° F)	Risk is high. All outdoor activities should be shortened. Water and rest breaks should be increased and athletes should be given extended time out of the heat and humidity.
>33.4° C (>92° F)	Conditions are hazardous. All outside activities are suspended.

A second method to determine whether outside play should be modified or suspended is to utilize temperature and relative humidity readings. Use the Heat Index chart below to determine how to proceed with outdoor play.



Yellow Zone Risk is very low. Full activity.

Dark Yellow Zone Risk is moderate. Remind athletes and volunteers to drink plenty of water and seek shelter indoors when possible.

Orange Zone	Risk is high. All Outdoor activities should be shortened. Water and rest breaks should be increased and athletes should be given extended time out of the heat and humidity.
Red Zone	Conditions are hazardous. All outside competitions is suspended.

### **Fire or Evacuation Plan for Emergencies**

Create a fire and evacuation plan for indoor activities.

- Check the exits and develop an evacuation plan.
- Never use the elevator in a fire. The call buttons may take you to a floor filled with smoke or flames.
- Go to a designated gathering point outside well away from the building.
- Designate who will call 911 once outside of the building.
- Once outside, conduct a head count to make sure all athletes and volunteers exited the building.
- If the head count does not account for all individuals, do not return inside the building. Inform emergency personnel that someone is missing.

### **Missing Person(s) Procedure**

#### **0 – 30 MINUTES**

- Stop practice and organize search parties comprised of volunteers and spectators.
- Give all search party members the head coach's cell phone number to be contacted if the missing person is located.
- Make sure some volunteers stay with the other athletes at the practice site.

#### **30 MINUTES - 1 HOUR**

- Call police.
- Call the missing person's emergency contact to inform them of the situation.

## **Criminal Action of an Athlete, Coach or Volunteer**

The behavior of athletes, coaches and volunteers is governed by Special Olympics Virginia's Policy Manual and the Volunteer, Coach and Athlete Code of Conducts.

- Contact police immediately if you suspect criminal activity.
- Contact a SOVA staff member if the situation is serious and necessitates immediate attention.
- Complete a Code of Conduct Report Form for all incidents.
- Refer the incident to the Area Coordinator.
- The Area Coordinator should contact their Region Director to discuss the situation and appropriate follow-up action by the Area Council.
- Collectively, SOVA staff and the Area volunteers will formulate an Action Plan and communicate that to all parties involved.



## SOVA CONDUCT REPORT FORM

<b>Name of Athlete/Volunteer:</b>			
<b>Please check:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Athlete</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Unified Partner</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Coach</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Volunteer</b>			
<b>Date of Incident:</b>			
<b>Event Where Incident Occurred:</b>			

### Witnesses to Incident

Names	Role in SOVA Program

### Please Describe the Incident

### Action Taken at the Time of Incident

### Information on Person Completing the Form

<b>Form Completed By:</b>		
<b>Date Form was Completed:</b>		
<b>Street Address:</b>		
<b>City</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Zip Code</b>
<b>Telephone Number:</b>		
<b>E-Mail:</b>		

<b>Area Coordinator's Name:</b>
<b>Date Received by Area Coordinator:</b>

### Immediate Action Plan for Incident (Completed by Area or Local Coordinator)

<b>(Example: Nov. 14, 2016 - Notification sent to volunteer regarding incident from Area Coordinator)</b>	
Date	Action to be Taken



<b>Name of Athlete/Volunteer:</b>
<b>Date of Incident:</b>
<b>Event Where Incident Occurred:</b>

### Action Plan for Resolution of Incident

[illegible]

<b>Athlete's Signature: (if applicable)</b>
<b>Date:</b>
<b>Volunteer's Signature (if applicable)</b>
<b>Date:</b>
<b>Parent/Guardian/Approved Advocate for Athlete's Signature: (if applicable)</b>
<b>Date:</b>

### Information on Person Completing the Form

<b>Form Completed By:</b>		
<b>Date Form was completed:</b>		
<b>Street Address:</b>		
<b>City</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Zip Code</b>
<b>Telephone Number:</b>		
<b>E-Mail:</b>		
<b>Area Coordinator's Name:</b>		
<b>Date Received by Area Coordinator:</b>		
<b>Date Received by SOVA Region Director:</b>		

Special Olympics Virginia  
Emergency Action Plan Guide - Venue Specific for Coaches and Volunteers

Activate the Emergency Action Plan for the following:

- Any loss of consciousness
- Possible spine injury
- Dislocation, open or closed fractures
- Difficulty or absent breathing or pulse
- Exertional collapse with central nervous system dysfunction
- Uncertainty whether you have a medical emergency or not

Coaches name:
Sport:
Practice Site Name:
Practice Site Address:

Emergency Procedures/Venue Roles (complete prior to practices/games for each venue):

Primary provider of care on site:
Calls 911:
Location of first aid kit:
Location of AED:
Retrieves emergency medical equipment:
Opens gates or barriers to emergency vehicles:
Meets ambulance:
Crowd control and supervision of uninvolved athletes/volunteers:
Provides medical forms/information to emergency personnel:
Accompanies athlete/volunteer to the emergency facility:
Contacts parents/caregivers/emergency contacts:
Contacts SOVA staff regarding injury/situation:
Submits Incident Report Forms to SOVA:

Emergency Information:

Number of athletes/volunteers injured/ill:
Age of athletes/volunteers injured/ill:
Description of injury/illness:

## **On Site Emergency Procedures**

Emergency procedures for head coach or volunteer deemed in charge of venue:

- 1) Check the scene
  - a. Is it safe for you or others to help?
  - b. Complete injury/illness information while it is clear and fresh in your mind or designate someone to complete it during the situation.
- 2) Identify the severity of the injury/illness
  - a. Circulation, breathing, level of consciousness, bleeding.
- 3) Individual designated to call 911 must provide the following information:
  - a. Name.
  - b. General information about the victim and the injury.
  - c. Where you are.
  - d. Specific information about the venue (address, access, directions, GPS coordinates).

Stay on the phone with the 911 operator until instructed to hang-up. The caller should be the last to hang-up the phone.

- 4) Perform emergency care as qualified to do so.
- 5) Instruct designated volunteer to get emergency equipment if available.
- 6) Instruct designated volunteer who will guide the ambulance to go to the pre-determined location.