SPECIAL OLYMPICS IRELAND EVENT MANAGEMENT GUIDE

Date of this revision	November 2024
Date of Next Review	2027 - This Event Management Guide shall be reviewed & updated as required every three years or following any changes in legislation or regulations.

PURPOSE

SOI has produced this event management guide and toolkit to facilitate the safe management and high-quality delivery of SOI events organised and/or supported by our volunteers and employees across the island of Ireland.

The aim of the guide is to provide event management teams with the information they need to successfully plan and manage their event. This guide covers many elements of events; however, it is non exhaustive and is to be used to inform, guide and support your event team through each step of the planning, delivery and wrap-up of your event.

The information in this Guide is provided in an advisory capacity only and subject to periodic reviews, with consideration to changes in best practise, legislation etc. The guide will be supplemented by the provision of event management training for event teams and ongoing support from our Regional Staff.

The guide is full of practical advice and tips, presented in an accessible and user-friendly format. This will enable each member of the team to undertake their role effectively, whether you are an experienced event volunteer or a brand-new addition to the team.

Taking full advantage of this guide, coupled with the dedication, enthusiasm and hard work of your team, will go a long way to ensuring that your event is a success.

Through our sports, health and leadership programmes our athletes learn to be physically, mentally and emotionally fit. None of this would be possible without the great passion, energy and support of our volunteers, clubs and partners – THANK YOU!

USING THIS GUIDE

This guide has been broken down into the following sections to assist teams at each stage of their event planning and management:

- Introduction
- Building your event team
- Planning your event
- Running your event
- Post event

TOOLKITS

Several templates have been provided in our toolkit for use by Event Management Teams.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

> *An event is a single day sports competition that involves athletes from several clubs accompanied by their coaches, gathering in one location with the primary aim of participating in that specific sports competition.*

A successful event is one that:
- Offers quality competition, facilities and services to participating athletes, coaches, family members and spectators
- Is safe for all in attendance
- Runs efficiently and on time
- Results in a positive experience for athletes, their coaches, family members, volunteers, spectators and all involved
- Results in increased visibility and support for Special Olympics Ireland (SOI).

1.2 COMPONENTS OF AN EVENT

There are functional areas needed to make the event happen. The items in each area that support and are directly linked to a competition event include:

Sport
- Field of play
- Officials Meeting
- Club Check-In
- Head Coaches Meeting
- Competition Staging
- Competition
- Awards Staging
- Award Presentations
- Sports Information Desk

Operations
- Catering / Refreshment Area
- Signage
- Information Desk
- Opening Ceremony – to provide Athletes with a sense of occasion and celebration.
- Closing Ceremony – ceremony to close the event.

Volunteers
- Volunteer Check-in desk
- Volunteer Briefing and Debriefing
- Volunteer & Media Bibs
- Volunteer 'Thank You' communication

Event Services
- Medical Area and Ambulance parking
- Evacuation Routes and Assembly Area

- Access and Capacity Monitoring

- Parking Areas

- Venue Emergency Response Plan (VERP)

Safety
- Event Risk Assessment

- Venue Emergency Response Plan (VERP)

- Venue and Activity Monitoring

Safeguarding
- Awareness

- Incident Reporting

1.3   LINKING WITH SPECIAL OLYMPICS STAFF

In planning and managing a competition event, SOI staff will:
- Book the venues and sign any booking agreement / conditions
- Include the event in SOI's master calendar
- Process event invitations and entries
- Complete any budgeting, procurement administration and payment processing
- Support the Event Management Team (EMT) in their role
- Assist the EMT in securing the required equipment for the event and logistics of same
- Complete the volunteer thank you communications
- Liaise with the SOI Marketing Dept. to include the event on the SOI website where possible and promote the event through social channels.

As a starting point to planning your event, Regional Development Officer (RDO) - Sport in the Regional Office will work with the Event Management Team to provide the following details before planning begins:
- Event Date or timeframe within which the event must happen
- Agreed venue or potential venue for the event, with any available venue information
- Approximate number of athletes / participants
- Approximate number and locations of clubs
- Potential sources of sports and other equipment (if required)
- Requirements for providing the Regional Office with progress updates

Our staff are here to provide support to the Event Management Team; contact details can be found here - Speak to a Staff Member

Section

2

BUILDING YOUR EVENT TEAM

2.1 EVENT MANAGEMENT TEAM
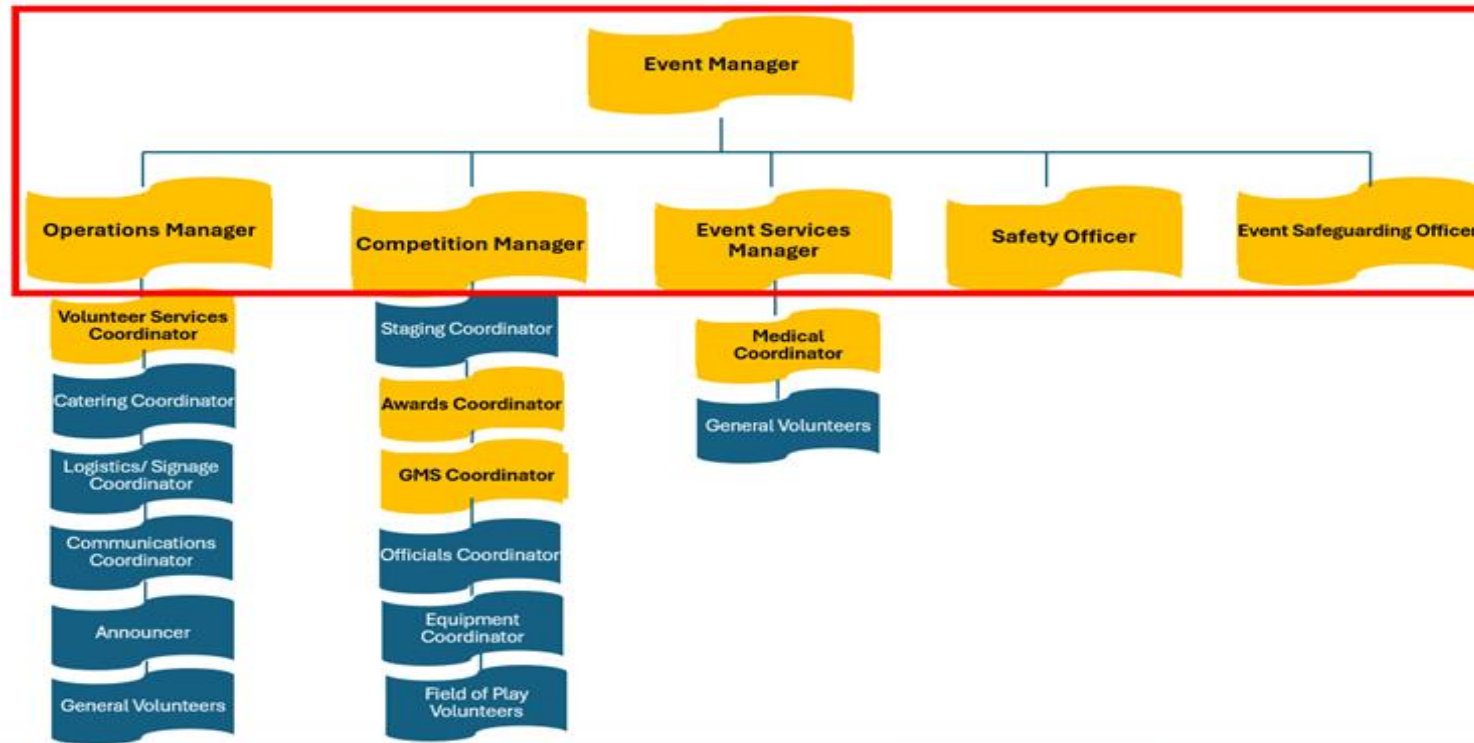
| | Role that must have an individual specifically assigned to it |

Every SOI competition event will have an Event Management Team. This applies regardless of the type of event, the sport, the venue, the number of participants or stage in the advancement cycle. To attain the standards that Special Olympics Ireland events need to achieve requires a team of people, working together, to make the event a success.

Everyone on the team will have their specific role and responsibilities but it is the Core Event Management Team who will organise and drive the delivery of the event. The Core Event Management Team includes the Event Manager, Competition Manager, Event Services Manager, Safety Officer and Event Safeguarding Officer.

Any roles highlighted in yellow above are roles that must have an individual specifically assigned to it.

2.2   EVENT VOLUNTEER ROLES

2.2.1   Management Team roles

There are 5 manager roles on the Event Management Team. These are:
1) Event Manager
2) Competition Manager
3) Operations Manager
4) Event Services Manager
5) Safety Officer

The keys responsibilities of volunteers who take on manager roles include:

- Liaising with the Venue
- Linking with Regional Staff
- Communicating with clubs and the volunteers
- Coordinating and supporting the work of team members
- Assisting team members wherever possible and being available for consultation
- Liaising with relevant statutory authorities if required e.g. Local Authority Events Dept., Environmental Health etc.

- Evaluating of the Event
- Driving the development of the Event plan
- Venue layout planning
- Ensuring that each function is integrating well with the others
- Problem solving when required
- Working with RDO for volunteers in your regional office to recruit assign volunteers to the Event Team
- Decision-making when necessary

Full role descriptions are included in the toolkit – click here

Combing Management Team Roles

The roles on the Event Management Team structure (2.1) that are not highlighted are functions that require planning but, depending on the Event, might not require an individual volunteer specifically assigned to them. These are functions that can be combined into one role for a volunteer.

The Event Services Manager and Safety Officer roles on the Event Management Team structure require planning but, depending on the Event, might not require an individual volunteer specifically assigned to the and can be combined into one role for a volunteer.

2.2.2   Coordinator roles

There are several different coordinator roles on any Event Management Team. A Coordinator is the person who leads a particular function, e.g. The Staging Coordinator plans and manages all aspects of staging.

The keys responsibilities of volunteers who take coordinator roles include:
- Being familiar with the requirements for their function
- Planning their function
- Managing their function on the Event day
- Coordinating and supporting their volunteers on the Event day
- Liaising with other coordinators as necessary
- Updating their Manager on the plan
- Evaluation of the event day

2.2.3   General volunteers (event day only)

The key difference between General Volunteers and other members of the event team is that General Volunteers do not have a role in the pre-planning of the Event. General Volunteers arrive at the event; they are briefed on their role and complete their specific tasks throughout the day.

Role	Description
Athlete Check In	Greet Head Coaches who will check in their full group of athletes. Let the Competition Manager and Event Manager know if any athletes are absent.
Awards Volunteer	Set up the awards area including: the podium and Special Olympics signage, awards trays, medals and ribbons. Set out the awards cushions in order of results. Ensure athletes are standing behind the correct number on the podium. Brief medal presenters on awards sequence.
Catering	Responsible for the set up and upkeep of the volunteer break area including the distribution of food (based on dietary requirements) and water.
Announcer	The Announcer is responsible for ensuring key messages are provided to attendees throughout the day such as sports related information (results update/ calling athletes up for their events/ presentation of awards) and other generic information.
Event Services	Assist with the logistics for the event which can include venue set-up, tear down and car park management. Welcome visitors and provides them with directions and information about the venue. Monitor all areas of the event including restricted access areas, exits and spectator areas; ensuring all areas are kept clean and tidy.
Field of Play Assistant	This role involves assisting the 'Competition Manger' and 'Officials/Umpires' on the field of play. Tasks may include line control/monitoring and results distribution.

Games Management System (G.M.S.)	Add athlete information into the Games Management System, update schedule as necessary, print scoring sheets, input results from competitions, print results for awards, awards staging, sports information desk and the MC.
Healthy Athletes Assistant	Assist with athlete flow and movement through the Healthy Athletes area. Ensure no overcrowding in Healthy Athletes area.
Healthy Athletes Volunteer	Assist the Clinical Directors across the Healthy Athlete disciplines offered at the event.
Medical	Respond to any incidents of a medical nature as they arise throughout the day. Link in with other medical providers on site (e.g. voluntary first aid providers) to ensure that appropriate care is provided. Record all medical encounters.
Photographer	Document the event using your own or SOI's camera. All content to be shared with Special Olympics Ireland within agreed timelines following the event.
Runner	Runners are responsible for transporting results from one area of the competition to other areas. This role requires the volunteer being on their feet for most of the event.
Sports Information Desk	Provide information and schedules on the day's events, along with protest forms, copies of the sports rules, results postings and sports information leaflets.
Staging Volunteer	Ensure all athletes are in place in the staging area prior to their event. Work off updated schedules as the day progresses. Assist athletes if required. Once the athletes have finished their competition, escort athletes back to their club coach or return zone.
Official e.g. Referee, Judge, Umpire	They work as part of a team with other volunteers such as the 'Field of Play' assistants. They ensure correct scoring is reported to G.M.S.
Venue Setup and Clean Up	**All volunteers** get involved with setting up and tearing down the venue for events. Volunteers also dress the venue with Special Olympics banners and signage and ensure all changing rooms, toilet facilities and medical areas are clearly marked. Clean up involves tear down of all equipment and signage before leaving the building after competition where required.
Volunteer Registration Desk	Greet volunteers as they arrive to the venue. Ask them to produce a photo ID along with their SOI membership card or digital pass, present them with their volunteer bib and lanyard, (lanyard to be returned at the end of the day). Mark volunteers' attendance on check-in sheet. Direct volunteers to the volunteer briefing area.

2.2.4   Reassigning volunteers

Each Functional Area must prioritise its posts and determine a minimum number of persons required to be operational.

On the day of the event, if a significant number of volunteers are no shows and the minimum number of volunteers within an FA is not reached for that venue, the volunteer services coordinator will look to redeploy available volunteers from another FA who will be briefed on their new role.

To prevent drop out (attrition) during the event, volunteers will be rotated through positions within their FA wherever possible.

Volunteer Services coordinator consults with the Event Management Team to seek redeployment of the number required. If agreement cannot be reached regarding redeployment from one FA to another, the Event Manager determines the priority based on operational requirements.

2.3   RECRUITING YOUR TEAM

What are the priority roles that need to be filled first?
There are two roles that must be filled from the very outset. They are:

1) **Event Manager** - will drive and coordinate the overall planning for the Event.
2) **Competition Manager** – will drive and coordinate the competition.

When the Event Manager and Competition Manager have been assigned the next priority roles are that of the Safety Officer, the Event Services Manager and the Operations Manager.

Once the **Event Manager and the Competition Manager** are in place they will work to assign the priority roles on the Team.

The RDO Sport will coordinate the recruitment and assignment of the Core Event Management Team and officials; while the RDO for Volunteers will recruit and assign Co-ordinators and General Volunteers.

Once the **Volunteer Services Coordinator** is in place they will:
- Work with the Core Event Management Team members to finalise general volunteer requirements
- Liaise with the RDO Volunteers to identify the outstanding positions that need be filled and what ones are the priorities

> **For example:** The Catering Coordinator will work on the catering plan for the Event. The Volunteer Services Coordinator will ask them how many General Volunteers will be needed to work in Catering on the day. This will be communicated to the RDO Volunteers who will then strive to recruit and assign the necessary numbers

SOI will assist this process by:
7.1 Ensuring that the Event is on the Master Calendar of Events as early as possible
7.2 Ensuring the event is advertised on the [SOI website](#) (where possible)

2.4   MEETINGS & BRIEFINGS

1) Event management training

Event management training sessions will be offered in each region or online. The training will cover the essential information that your team must know. It is recommended that at a minimum the Event Manager and the Competition Manager attend one of these sessions. However, if you have other Team members in place they are encouraged to attend also. It is the responsibility of the Event Manager and Competition Manager to pass down the necessary information they receive to the rest of the Team.

Our online event management training module is available at the following link - SOI Event Management Training

2) Event Management Team Meetings

One of the most practical and effective ways your team will gather information about the event and what they need to do is in team meetings. Who is responsible for what should be openly discussed in the pre-event planning meetings so that no assumptions are made.

Working off your Event Action plan to look ahead at upcoming tasks, again ensuring that they are clear and understood.

It may be beneficial to host the initial EMT meeting on site so each member can familiarise themselves with the venue, layout and facilities available. It is recommended to hold an event team meeting at least one every fortnight. Teams can decide if it suits them best to have subsequent meetings in person or virtually (on-line).

Following the event the EMT should host a Debrief meeting so that experiences can be shared and discussed before they are forgotten, and any suggestions or lessons learned can be passed onto SOI.

3) Volunteer Pre-event Communications

A volunteer briefing pack will be communicated to the volunteer by SOI. The Event Management Team must provide SOI with all relevant information for this communication including:

- Event Schedule
- Catering arrangements
- Directions to the venue / parking information
- Venue Layout / venue information
- Volunteer assignments
- Any relevant Public Health information depending on the advice of the Public Health Agencies.

4) **Venue walk-through training**

Depending on the event there may be a need for a venue walk-through for your full event team. This will happen at some point close to, but prior to, the Event day or to coincide with one of your EMT meetings. The Event Manager will take responsibility for this, and it will allow volunteers to become familiar with the venue and their role in advance of the Event.

5) **Volunteer Event Day – briefing and debriefing**

Every event day should involve a briefing of team members before the event starts to ensure everyone is aware of the plan and their role in implementing it, and a debrief meeting at the end the day to talk about what went well and what can be improved the next time.

It is essential that every volunteer receives a thorough briefing on their role and what is expected of them before they take up their position. Every volunteer must be comfortable that they know what they must do and what their responsibilities are. This is delivered by the Manager or Coordinator of the function and happens on the morning of the Event before they start (e.g. Operations Manager or Catering Coordinator will meet volunteers assisting with catering and deliver the briefing).

Volunteers will be advised that if they are unclear on any aspect of their role, they should let their coordinator or EMT member know, and they will assist you.

6) **Additional Training**

Any volunteer who takes part in your event must be an active volunteer with Special Olympics Ireland. The RDO for Volunteers in your Regional Office will liaise with any volunteers who require training or updates to their training e.g. safeguarding training.

Depending on your specific role there may be an opportunity to receive job specific training also.

3

PLANNING YOUR EVENT

Timeline from the event	Task	Responsibility
10 Weeks	Event Entry Forms sent to all clubs	RDO Sport
	Recruitment of Event Management Team (EMT)	RDO Sport / Vol
8 Weeks	First Core EMT meeting	RDO Sport to host
	Volunteer Estimates	EMT
7 Weeks	Reminder of closing date for event entries	RDO Sport
6 Weeks	Entry Deadline	
	Identify Equipment Needs	EMT
	Venue Mapping – space allocation	EMT
	Undertake Event Risk Assessment	EMT
	Second EMT meeting set up by Event Manager	EMT
5 Weeks	Delegation Report sent to all clubs entered in the event	RDO Sport
	Volunteer Recruitment Process	RDO Vol
4 Weeks	Submission of missing info from event entries	Clubs
	Cutoff date for late entry appeals	
	Complete Event Day Schedule and Plan	EMT
	Divisioning and scheduling on GMS	Competition Manager & RDO Sport
	Core EMT – Functional Area check ins on progress	EMT
2 Weeks	Complete Venue Emergency Response Plan (VERP) and review event risk assessment	EMT
	Promote the event on social media etc.	EMT / SOI
	Assigning of volunteer roles	RDO Vol
	Event Manager and RDO Check In	RDO Sport / Vol
1.5 Weeks (10 days)	Submission of improved performance scores	Clubs
1 Week	Sports schedule and event information distributed to all participating clubs	RDO Sport
	Event information distributed to all volunteers	RDO Vol

3.1   PUTTING TOGETHER AN EVENT PLAN

When planning for the components of an event; the basic steps are the same:
1.   Identify the tasks or actions that must be done to be ready for event day
2.   Decide when the tasks need to be complete by
3.   Decide who is going to undertake each task
4.   Document the tasks, timelines and responsibilities in a Pre-event Action Plan
5.   Document outcomes and decisions in an Event Day Plan

The main benefits of developing and documenting an action plan are that:

- It is more easily communicated, and is no longer "in someone's head", which means that if one member of the team becomes unavailable others can continue with planning and running the event
- It can be tracked in the weeks coming up to your event so that the event team can see how preparations are progressing.
- It can also be used to provide update reports to the SOI staff member.

3.2   PRE-EVENT ACTION PLAN

As a starting point for event team, SOI has compiled a generic pre-event action plan (see Toolkit). The structure of an action plan matches the first three steps above – Task, By When and Responsibility.

When this has been done for each of the areas or aspects of your event, the task lists can be combined into an overall pre-event action plan. The key tasks for most events are the same, but every event will have specific tasks that need to be defined and added to the generic list by the event team to form a full pre-event action plan.

For example: In relation to parking at an event where there is a lack of car parking space, for example, the relevant section of the event plan might look like the following:

TASK	BY WHEN	RESPONSIBLITY	DONE
Estimate parking requirements	1ST May	John	Yes
Contact the venue to reserve spaces	10th May	Deirdre	Yes
Advise attending clubs of parking arrangements	31ST May	SOI staff	
Parking plan complete	31ST May		

3.3   EVENT DAY PLAN

As progress is made through the tasks in the action plan, information and decisions will be clarified and made. These will determine how the event will be run on the day – **the Event Day Plan**. Following the same structure as the Action Plan, with headings relevant to your specific event, this plan should state what will happen instead of tasks or open questions.

For example: the parking section of the Event Day Plan, based on the outcomes of the tasks outlined above, might read as follows:

> Parking
> There will be 30 spaces reserved for club buses in the Visitors' Car Park. A further 20 spaces will be available for family members and volunteers, on a first-come first-served basis. The car park will be staffed by Event Services volunteers from 9am – 6pm.

An Event Day Plan has template is available for event teams (see Toolkit)

3.4   USING & TRACKING YOUR ACTION PLAN

Implementing a pre-event Action Plan is the key to a successful event, which means it needs to be actively used and tracked throughout the planning phase by the event team.

There are several ways this can be achieved, such as the following:

- Ensure every member of the team has the action plan
- Check that everyone who has a task to undertake understands the task and when it needs to be done by
- Meet regularly to review the plan, cross off completed tasks and identify what needs to be done to finalise incomplete tasks
- In the same meetings, look ahead at upcoming tasks, again ensuring that they are clear and understood
- If possible, redistribute the plan once it has been updated.

Each event team will need to update their relevant SOI staff member at least once a month on progress with planning their event.

3.5   VENUE PLANNING

In planning for the event there are several items that need to be considered
1. What venue to use?
2. Venue Capacity
3. Maximum quota that can be managed in a venue

Each of these areas will be dealt with in more detail in the following 3 sections.

3.5.1   WHAT VENUE TO USE

In deciding what venue to use for your event, there are several things to consider. There are minimum standards set for each sport in terms of the venues and what facilities should be available. The following are just some of these minimum requirements: please check your sport specific pages for the minimum requirements for your sport.

3.5.2   MINIMUM STANDARDS – SOME EXAMPLES

- Number of lanes available – Swimming, athletics and bowling
- Changing Rooms – football, basketball and MATP
- Lane Ropes – Swimming
- Tables and Nets – table-tennis and badminton
- Available space for all disciplines – golf skills, field events in athletics
- Court surrounds – bocce, table-tennis
- Sufficient and suitable horses – equestrian
- Anchor Points - gymnastics

3.5.3 CAPACITY IN THE VENUE

In this section, we look at how many people can be accommodated in the event space. It is necessary to view this section together with the minimum standards for your sport as they both affect each other. Once the minimum standards have been checked and you are happy that the venue meets those requirements, it is now time to view the field of play area, staging area etc. to see how many people plus the necessary FFE (furniture, fittings and equipment) can these areas comfortably accommodate. Once this step is completed, it is now time to decide how many athletes can be registered for the event.

In assessing the capacity of the venue, the facility liaison will be able to assist. Capacities may be in place for specific areas of a venue. The objectives are to avoid the dangers of over-crowding and ensure that the means of escape in an emergency are adequate for the numbers attending.

3.5.4 ATHLETE QUOTA

There are three main things to consider when establishing the maximum quota that you have at the event.
1. Overall time to run the event i.e. 10am start and a 4pm finish.
2. Available facilities i.e. 6 or 8 lane track or pool, 12 bowling lanes etc.
3. Number of events each athlete can enter.

Example - An athletics event
Each athlete can enter a maximum of two events plus one relay
Start time 9.30am in the venue
Finish time – Buses departing at 4.30pm
There are 8 lanes available

Step1. Available time – 5hrs of competition, allows for staging, a one-hour lunch break plus awards at the end of day.
Step2. 8 Lanes available – average of 5 in each division
Step3. Each athlete has entered 3 events – so if you take a starting point of 200 athletes, that's 600 events (3x200)

Average 5 in each event – (600÷5) -120 events
Each event takes approximately 5 minutes – 600 minutes

We know the available competition time is 300 minutes or 5hrs so it is safe to say that you can only accommodate 100 athletes at this event to finish within the agreed time.

Events like swimming and athletics are very similar, and the same formula can be used for both whereas sports like football and basketball are very different in nature as the length of each game must be taken into consideration.

Also worth considering is operating a running lunch break which would allow you to cater for more athletes in the overall programme.

3.5.5   VENUE LAYOUT

It is important at an event that the location or the field of play (i.e. where the competition takes place); has been properly planned for and laid out in accordance with these plans. Prior to the event, the team should have identified and agreed where the sports or event activity will take place.

However, there are also many other spaces that need to be planned. Designing your venue is a critical part of the planning process. This can be achieved with the use of venue layout drawings. These can be as simple as a hand drawn sketch of the venue with all the different spaces identified on it. If the venue you are using already has plans or drawings, then it will make it even more straightforward.

The spaces that you need to plan for when designing your venue relate closely to the components of an Event. These include:

Sport	- Field of Play - Staging area - Athlete changing area / toilets - Head Coach (athlete) Check-in - Sports Information Desk	- Competition Management Office - Results posting area - Awards area (Incl. Podium, Awards Staging) - Athlete lunch area (where possible)
General	- Event Management Office - Medical Centre - Volunteer check-in desk - Information desk - Volunteer break area (where possible) - PA announcement area	- Spectator seating - Public toilets - General storage area - Delivery drops off/pick up point (if necessary) - Public catering area (if available) - Waste disposal point
Transport & Parking	- Athlete drop-off/pick up point - Event Parking	- Volunteer Parking - Emergency vehicle parking

Working on the list above will ensure that the most suitable space is identified for each function and that access and pedestrian routes are pre-planned, leading to an overall well-run event.

Note: The *Event Management Office* is a room (or desk if a room is not available) that acts as a 'back office' for your event. It should be available to the event management team for meetings, storage of documents (e.g. forms, reports), and general administration. It is also, where the communications desk should be located.

The *Competition Management Office (CMO)* is the site, be it an actual office or a cordoned area in the venue, where GMS is housed, and all paperwork is produced in relation to the sport.

3.5.6   RESTRICTED AREAS

Restricted areas are simply parts of the venue, which you need to control access to, either for safeguarding or security reasons or simply for ease of running the event. Examples include changing areas, field of play, staging area, awards, etc.

When planning your venue decide what areas are restricted then mark them as such on your venue layout drawing. The main benefit of planning this way is that it makes it easier for your team to run the event because it keeps areas clear.   The EMT should think of items such as:

- Can spectators be easily separated from the athletes?
- Are there different toilet facilities for athletes and spectators?
- Are toilets part of changing facilities?
- Where can attendees be checked so as not to allow access to areas that people haven't been granted access to?

3.5.7   FACILITY LIAISON

The Facility Liaison is the contact person for the venue where the event is being held. They will not have a major role in the planning and management of the event but will need to be consulted and involved at various stages in the planning process. The Event Manager is usually the person who links with the Facility Liaison.

3.6   PLANNING FOR THE SPORTS COMPETITION

Please refer to Section 4 for information on planning and running the sports competition.
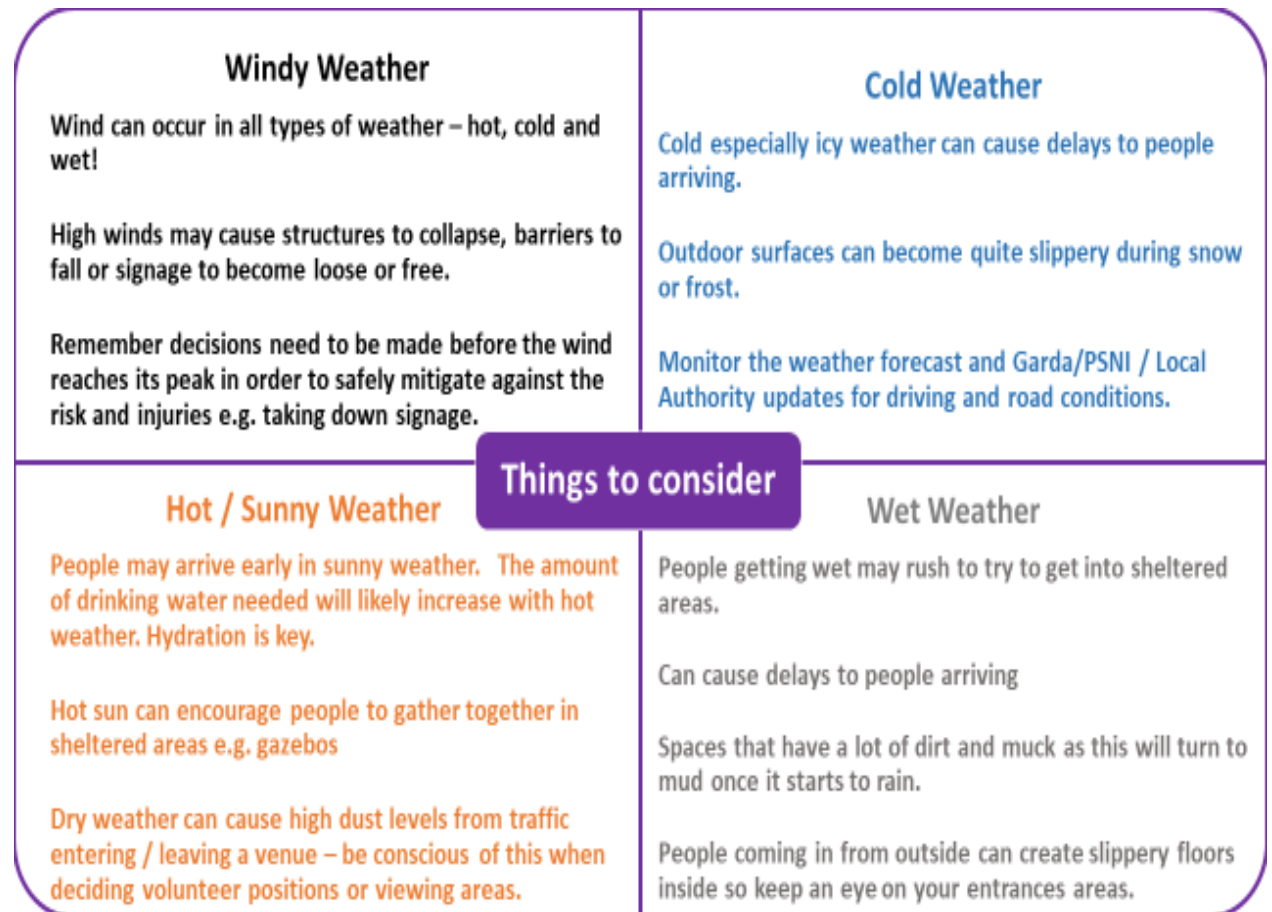
3.7 PLANNING FOR A SAFE EVENT

3.7.1 WEATHER CONDITIONS

You cannot control the weather; but monitoring the weather in the lead up to an event can be of great help - https://www.met.ie/ or https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/forecast/regional/ni. Just use common sense and your best judgement. When you become aware that weather will be hot, wet, cold etc. you should inform all attendees accordingly to ensure they dress appropriately for the weather, they hydrate properly before the event; know to bring wet gear, sun scream etc. Weather impacts everyone's mood so remember your volunteers as well as athletes and spectators.

Key questions:
- How will weather impact the ability and skill level of the athletes?
- Is there a contingency plan – can we delay, alter, postpone or cancel the event?
- Who needs to be consulted about any changes – attendees, venue, SOI?
- Is it possible to get external areas gritted or salted?
- Are public drinking water taps available?
- Will your external areas be able for large amounts of rain e.g. field of play – pitch waterlogged or soft ground in the car park leading to cars stuck in the grass?
- How will winds affect signage, the sound from any PA systems or speakers?
- Are you aware of the wind loadings for your structures, how will this be monitored?

Windy Weather

Wind can occur in all types of weather – hot, cold and wet!

High winds may cause structures to collapse, barriers to fall or signage to become loose or free.

Remember decisions need to be made before the wind reaches its peak in order to safely mitigate against the risk and injuries e.g. taking down signage.

Cold Weather

Cold especially icy weather can cause delays to people arriving.

Outdoor surfaces can become quite slippery during snow or frost.

Monitor the weather forecast and Garda/PSNI / Local Authority updates for driving and road conditions.

Things to consider

Hot / Sunny Weather

People may arrive early in sunny weather. The amount of drinking water needed will likely increase with hot weather. Hydration is key.

Hot sun can encourage people to gather together in sheltered areas e.g. gazebos

Dry weather can cause high dust levels from traffic entering / leaving a venue – be conscious of this when deciding volunteer positions or viewing areas.

Wet Weather

People getting wet may rush to try to get into sheltered areas.

Can cause delays to people arriving

Spaces that have a lot of dirt and muck as this will turn to mud once it starts to rain.

People coming in from outside can create slippery floors inside so keep an eye on your entrances areas.

3.8   FURNITURE, FIXTURES, AND EQUIPMENT (FFE)

➢ The EMT should make a list of all the equipment that will be required for the various areas within the event – please see example below.
➢ This list should be discussed at an event management meeting to ensure all areas are covered.
➢ The Event Manager / Operations Manager will then liaise with the RDO Sport to confirm the source of the items.
➢ SOI staff will look after any procurement required.
➢ Once the source is confirmed the EMT can look at the scheduling of deliveries and collections and work on their plan for set up and tear down.

Event	Functional Areas	Items	Qty.	Location Required	Required for Officials	Comments	Source (if known)
Badminton	Competition	Printer	1	Competition Office	No	A4 printer required	SOI
Badminton	Competition	Umpire Chairs	8	Field of Play	Yes	The venue's umpire chairs will be used.	Venue
Badminton	Event Services	Car parking Signage	6	Car park	No		SOI
Badminton	Operations	Tables	5	Catering area	No		Venue
Badminton	Medical	First Aid Kits	2	Medical Room	No		SOI
Badminton	Safety	Red & White Tape	4	Event Management Office	No		SOI

3.9   VENUE SET UP SCHEDULE

Once the source of the FFE is confirmed the EMT can look at the scheduling of deliveries and collections and work on their plan for set up and tear down. Because time is often tight, and there may well be a logical sequence to some set-up activities, the best way to approach this is to document a 'set-up schedule'. The major advantages of a set-up schedule are that things are less likely to be forgotten, and sufficient time can be allowed to set the venue up in a safe fashion. A sample template for a set-up schedule follows:

Time	Set-up Task	Responsibility
08:00	Set up volunteer check-in table	John
08:20	Mark off reserved parking area with cones	Deirdre
08:30	Set up athlete staging area	John

4

SPORT / COMPETITION

This section should be read in conjunction with SOI Regulations Governing Special Olympics Ireland Sport 2021 - 2025 and the Official Special Olympics Summer/ Winter Sports Rules available on the Special Olympics Ireland website that are used to govern our competitions - https://www.specialolympics.ie/sport/sports

4.1   ROLE OF THE COMPETITION MANAGER

A competition manager will be appointed for each sports event and will be responsible for the overall planning, development and implementation of the competition at the event. They will be a key member of the Event Management Team and work closely with the event manager from their appointment until the event report is submitted. Key tasks in relation to this position are

- To ensure the implementation of the competition operating plan
- Ensure that all key positions are staffed, scheduled and confirmed.
- Attend all meetings with the event team
- Inspect the set up and tear down of the Field of Play and sign off on same
- Be the decision maker in conjunction with the Event Manager on all sports related delays and postponements.
- Assist with the recruitment of officials and sport specific volunteers to join the team.
- Plan the agenda and conduct the first Head Coaches meeting
- Identify the Jury of Sport in accordance with National Governing Body guidelines
- Ensures all sports specific equipment is in place for the event
- Submit an evaluation by the agreed date.

4.2   ATHLETE QUOTA

Please refer to Section 3.5.4 above.

4.3   GAMES MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The Games Management System (GMS) is a software package used by Special Olympics Ireland to manage all events and Games. All regions have GMS on a local PC, which can used to register athletes and coaches for events. The current registration forms in use are designed so that they mirror the steps in GMS for registering athletes.

It is important for anyone planning to use GMS to have attended training on the system or to utilise volunteers in your region who have done so. Please talk to your RDO Sport if you require GMS training.

Once the competition is set up correctly on the system you are ready to register the athletes. When all athletes are entered into their correct sports events the Competition Manager and your GMS operator can begin the initial divisioning process.

4.4   DO ALL COMPETITION EVENTS HAVE REGISTRATION?

To successfully run the sport, it is vital to have all the necessary information pertaining to each athlete. An athlete registration form is used for this purpose and contains the following information, athlete's name, club, date of birth, events being entered and the qualifying score/time or distance.

Special Olympics Ireland has standard registration/entry forms which are available from each of the regional offices and should be used for all events across the programme. The Competition Manager will establish a timeframe for managing the registration process for the event and will be the point of contact for all sports related queries.

In establishing this timeframe, the following points need to be given consideration:
I.   The date of the event – the time of year can adversely affect timely responses i.e. Christmas and Easter holidays etc. With the introduction of the 4-year calendar of events all sports will have a designated time of year when they take place.
II.   How long the process will take (how long will it take the Competition Manager to do this piece of work) i.e. his or her available time
III.   Access to the regional office – Games Management System

Athlete Registration forms for a one-day event should be distributed approximately 10 weeks prior to the event date and returned to the Regional Office before or on the deadline – which is six weeks prior to the event.   Once the forms are returned to the Regional Office all the information should be entered into GMS. If an athlete is already registered on GMS, they can be advanced into the new event.

4.5   WHAT IS DIVISIONING?

Divisioning is the process whereby athletes are placed in groups according to age, gender and ability to provide fair and equitable competition for all. Ability is the overriding factor when divisioning athletes in Special Olympics. It is important that Competition Managers explore all available options to ensure that each athlete has a good competitive experience. The following are the age groups for individual and team sports.

Individual	Team
8 – 11yrs	15 and under
12 – 15yrs	16 – 21yrs
16 – 21yrs	22 and over
22 – 29yrs	
30+	

The aim when divisioning is to place at least three athletes or teams and a maximum of 8 athletes or teams in each division.

To offer a good quality, competitive experience, an athlete can move up an age group but may not move down an age group, and athletes may also participate in a mixed gender division. In exceptional cases where it isn't possible to get competition for a single athlete or for two athletes or teams they may participate in a one- or two-person division.

For a one-day event athletes are divisioned on their submitted entry scores/times or distances and all events on the day are finals.

For events that run over a few days or for Games, athletes are divisioned twice, once on their entry scores and secondly after they have competed in preliminary rounds of competition. In this case athletes are re-divisioned for finals.

In team sports and in racket sports i.e. badminton and table tennis the divisioning process is done by a series of shortened games where athletes are assessed by a group of observers prior to being placed in final divisions.

4.6   HOW TO PRODUCE A SCHEDULE AND PROGRAMME FOR YOUR EVENT?

When the Competition Manager is satisfied that divisioning is complete, lane numbers, court numbers or table numbers can be assigned to each athlete or team, together with a start time for their divisions on GMS. The GMS operator will be familiar with this process.

When this piece or work is completed a full schedule of events can be circulated to all clubs. This schedule should be produced from GMS by printing condensed heat sheets in time order. This document then becomes your programme for the event.

Please refer to your GMS training manual for more detailed information.

4.7   WHO NEEDS THE RESULTS?

On the day of the event finish times, scores and distances can be entered directly into GMS and results produced immediately. If this is the case GMS will produce all the necessary paperwork on the day and the Competition Management Office will communicate the results to the awards area. They will also post them on a notice board or area visible to spectators in the venue.

Where this is not possible, all results should be held by the Competition Manager and following the event, be inputted into GMS in the regional office. A full copy of results should be signed off by the Competition Manager and the RDO Sport and distributed to all clubs within two weeks after the event.

4.8   PAPER AND ATHLETE FLOW

When planning the sport, it is important for the Competition Manager to know what paperwork they need to run the sport, where the paper needs to go during the event and how it's going to get there. They will also need to plan how athletes will move through the venue on the day keeping the sport running smoothly. The areas to plan for are as follows

1. What paperwork do you need?   3. Where does it need to go?
2. Who needs to see it?   4. Paper Trail

4.8.1   What paperwork do you need?

Each sport will differ in the types of paper it needs to operate effectively. In football, basketball, table tennis and badminton match cards as well as league sheets or tables are required. In sports like Swimming and athletics heat sheets are more appropriate. Other sports like golf and bowling have multi score systems i.e. their scores are based on several different items to be added together. Gymnastics and equestrian are judged sports and therefore need judges' sheets. Each of these will be dealt with, within the relevant sport specific pages.   it is important for both you and your GMS operator to know what is required; so that you can prepare certain paperwork in advance of the event. This will obviously greatly assist the smooth operation of the event if there was a power failure.

4.8.2   Who needs to see it?

Once you have decided what paperwork is necessary to run the sport the next step is deciding who needs to get it. To assist you in deciding who needs to see the paperwork you should:

- Look at the first piece of paper that you are going to use
- Take that piece of paper through the event to see how many people will handle it
- Decide if you need more than one copy

> **Example -** Athletics Heat Sheet – the following copies are required.
> 1. Staging – to assign places to each athlete
> 2. Start Line – again to maintain the order and lane assignment
> 3. Finish Line – Recorders who take the finish times from the manual scorekeepers.
> 4. Competition Management Office – input results into GMS
> 5. Awards Staging – Check in and place in order

4.8.3 Where does it need to go?

Now that you know who needs to see the paperwork, you can now easily identify the different areas that need to receive the information. Paper will flow from the Competition Management Office (CMO) as this is the central hub of activity for the sport.

From the CMO all communication pertaining to the sport will move through the venue. A typical piece of paper will move on average through 4 cycles **CMO » Staging » Field of Play » CMO.** While this is a very simple flow, all sports follow the same basic principle.

The awards area in each venue also needs to be taken into consideration and will be covered in more detail in section 4.15.

4.8.4 Paper Trail

It is essential at all events that all the paperwork is maintained by the Competition Manager and those working in the CMO. It is good practice for all Competition Managers to establish a tracking or audit system for the event. This is to ensure that:

1. A proper system is in place to maintain records.
2. In the event of a protest being submitted a proper tracking is in place to establish the outcome of the protest.

4.8.5 Where does all of this happen?

You will have seen and heard the term Competition Management Office or CMO several times throughout this document. This is the site, be it an actual office or a cordoned area in the venue, where GMS is housed, and all paperwork is produced in relation to the sport. This is a secure, accessed control area and only those working in that area should be admitted. In the event of a protest being lodged, the Competition Manager and the other members of the Sports Rules Committee would meet here to discuss the protest and arrive at a decision.

4.9   STAGING FOR COMPETITION AND AWARDS

In this section we will outline what a staging area is, why it is necessary and finally why two staging areas are beneficial when organising your event.

4.9.1   What is staging?

Staging is the process whereby athletes are convened in an area to prepare them for participation on the field of play. Athletes are usually staged in rows of chairs or benches according to the order of their division, table, pitch or court assignment.

For instance, in athletics and Swimming, athletes are seated per division and by lane assignment so that if an athlete is in division 5 and assigned to Lane 3, they would be seated in Row 5 and seat number 3.

Athletes are escorted by volunteers, from the staging area to the field of play. To assist with the smooth operation of this area coaches are not allowed in the staging area unless an athlete is in difficulty or needs assistance.

4.9.2   Why two staging areas?

At most events, following competition, athletes are brought to a second staging area to prepare them for the awards ceremony.

The staging area for awards will be like the staging area for competition, but this time athletes will be seated by division and in the order that they will be presented on the podium.

It differs slightly from competition staging in that the order of seating is either

8th place, 6th place, 4th place, 2nd place, 1st place, 3rd place, 5th place, 7th place.

Or

7th place, 5th place, 3rd place, 1st place, 2nd place, 4th place, 6thplace, 8th place

Again, access is limited in this area and coaches are not permitted unless requested. Staging for both competition and for awards ensures that the correct athlete is in the correct lane or the correct finishing place and aids the flow of an event.

4.10   FIELD OF PLAY

The field of play is the area in the venue where the competition will be held i.e. swimming pool, the track and infield in athletics, bowling lanes, soccer pitches, tables and surround areas in table tennis or courts for badminton and basketball. This is the most controlled area in a venue and

only those who need to be on the field of play i.e. officials and athletes will be permitted. At some events where media are in attendance, they may request access, and they can only do this if escorted by a sport volunteer and with permission from Competition Manager.

4.10.1 How do you mark the layout of the field of play?

During the planning process for the event, it is always good practice to map out on a venue layout where each aspect of the sport is going to be for the event. Some of the areas to be marked are:

- Field of Play including judges' tables, umpire's chairs etc.
- Staging
- Competition Management Office
- Awards Staging
- Awards Podium if available

If there is no venue layout available a simple hand drawn layout should be used to illustrate the sport needs to the Event Manager.

4.10.2 What equipment do you need on the field of play?

When assessing your needs for the field of play it is important that only essential equipment for the sport should be allowed. In a sport like athletics and team sports a number of benches can be used for athletes waiting to compete i.e. for field events in athletics while waiting for their throw or jump, teams in basketball and football on the sideline. For other sports like bowling the seating may already be in situ.

There are several sports with very specific needs for the field of play e.g.

- Gymnastics, where each apparatus must have run off areas as well as a judging table.
- Swimming will need to ensure that lane ropes are available to clearly define each lane.
- Table tennis surrounds are usually used to clearly mark the playing area but could be as much as c.3metres/10feet at either end of the table and 1.5metres / 5 feet at either side which could have implications in a smaller venue.

Again, each sport will differ in this area, and you should refer to the sport specific guidelines - https://www.specialolympics.ie/sport/sports.

4.11   SPORTS INFORMATION DESKS –WHAT INFORMATION AND WHERE?

In each venue it is essential to have a sports information desk (SID) as the main point of contact for Head Coaches to contact competition management. This desk should be in operation a half hour prior to the start of competition and a half hour after the end of competition. It needs to be visible in the venue and the location of the desk should be communicated at the Head Coaches meeting on the day of the event. The desk should have at a minimum the following information available:

- Protest Forms
- Improved Performance Request Form
- Replacement/Collection Awards Form
- Sport Schedule
- NGB Rules
- Special Olympics Official Summer / Winter Sports Rules
- Regulations Governing Special Olympics Ireland Sport 2021 - 2025

4.12   PROTESTS AND APPEALS

At all Special Olympics events a Head Coach has the right to make a protest if they feel that the rules have been infringed or misapplied during the event.

Only the Head Coach for the event may lodge a protest in writing on an official Protest Form. This expressly prohibits any other individual from protesting. The protest must be lodged within 30 minutes after the conclusion of an event.

Please refer to the Policy and Procedure for managing protests and appeals at an event See section 18.11 Policies & Procedures

4.13   HEAD COACHES MEETING

At all events a Head Coaches meeting should be held at the start of the day to set the scene for the attending Clubs. This is a prime opportunity for the Competition Manager (CM) and the Event Manager (EM) to explain how the event is going to run on the day, from staging areas, athlete flow, emergency procedures, schedules, awards etc. It is extremely important that a Head Coach from each Clubs attends the meeting and passes on the information to the other coaches from their Club.

4.13.1 When to have the meeting?
While the coaches from each club are registering their athletes and getting everyone settled on arrival at an event, the EM and CM have approximately a half hour available to them to deliver their key messages to the Head Coaches.

4.13.2 Where to have the meeting?
The meeting should be held in a quiet place (where possible) at that time of the day. If the awards staging area is not being used at this time or an unused seating area in the venue would be ideal.

4.13.3 Who chairs the meeting?

All issues relating to the venue should be delivered by the Event Manager and all sports issues by the Competition Manager, so the meeting is jointly chaired.

4.13.4 The Agenda

Items on the agenda should include but are not limited to the following:
- Introduction of the Event Manager and Competition Manager
- Coaches and athlete's responsibilities
- Staging
- Rules and Honest Effort reminder
- Disqualifications, Protest & Appeals procedures
- Sports Information Desks
- Divisioning Schedule if this applies
- Venue Layout
- Medical
- Awards

4.14   OFFICIALS

During the planning stages of the event, when the quota for the event and the time available is defined you will be able to calculate the required numbers of officials.

Only qualified officials should be used at events and sufficient numbers of officials may be secured through the volunteer support centres in your region. If there is a shortfall in the numbers required, the local branch of the NGB for the sport i.e. Munster branch of the BUI or the GUI should be contacted for support.

Once you have the required number of officials recruited it may be necessary to do some additional training with the officials as some may not have been involved with Special Olympics before. Additionally, some Special Olympics sports offer events that are not offered in mainstream programmes i.e. walks, assisted walks and flotation races in swimming, softball throw and standing long jump in athletics, skills events in table-tennis, golf and basketball etc.

If using new referees for team sports it is wise to talk with them prior to the match and ensure that the rules applied are consistent with NGB and Special Olympics rules.

4.15 AWARDS

The functional area of awards is the final part of the sports function at an event. Awards Ceremonies should highlight the achievement of each athlete in a dignified manner and there should be some pageantry attached to the ceremony itself. The Award Ceremony is planned and scripted in accordance with specific Special Olympics Protocol.

The awards ceremony should allow the awards to flow smoothly and efficiently in tandem with the competition. Medals will be presented to those athletes in 1st through to 3rd place and ribbons will be presented to athletes in 4th through to 8th place.

Awards will be presented to athletes/teams as follows:
1. Medals will be presented 1st through to 3rd place and ribbons will be presented 4th through 8th place.
2. Athletes disqualified for technical rules infringements or who 'do not finish' will be awarded a participation ribbon on the last position on the podium.
3. Athletes who are disqualified for unsportsmanlike behaviour will not receive an award.
4. At National level a challenge Medal Award will be presented to each athlete participating in the Motor Activities Training Programme.
5. At regional / area level a specific MATP participation ribbon is presented.

In the case of a tie, each athlete or team that has achieved the same result shall receive the award for the highest place (for example, two athletes who tie for second place shall each receive the silver medal). Athletes or teams that follow shall receive the appropriate award for their place of finish (for example, an athlete who crossed the finish line following the two athletes who tied for second, shall receive the third-place medal).

It is the intention that all Awards ceremonies should take place within 30 minutes following completion of the event, or as soon as possible. Awards will not wait for a protest or a ruling of a protest before presenting awards.

There are four areas in each awards location:
1. **Staging Area**: athlete escorts bring the results and athletes to the staging area from each competition. After checking in at the staging area, athletes are lined up on chairs, in order of place (see section 4.9.2), in preparation to receive their awards.
2. **Preparation Area**: the awards are organised and placed on a tray in the correct sequence in preparation for the ceremonies.
3. **Presentation Area**: where the actual awards ceremony takes place

4. **Exit / Athlete Pick Up Area**: athletes remain here until a coach / member of their club arrives to escort them from awards

Where possible, the entire awards area will be zoned with a designated area for coaches and spectators to view the Awards Ceremonies. Coaches, spectators and volunteers other than the awards team will not be permitted access to the awards area other than to the designated spectator area.

Full scripts are available for all awards ceremonies in our [toolkit](#).

RUNNING THE EVENT

5.1 RUNNING A SAFE EVENT

5.1.1 SAFETY BRIEFINGS

All volunteers in each of the functional areas should be made aware of their responsibility for the safe management of their area and be made aware of the role of the Safety Officer (or event services manager if this is a combined role) and the guidance or support available to them. Each volunteer should be briefed by their functional area coordinator / Event Management Team member prior to the start of the event.

All those who have a role to play in traffic management, crowd management or emergency procedures (e.g. first aid, MC, etc.) must be thoroughly briefed immediately before the event.   The briefing should include information on:

- Who is the event's Safety Officer and Event Manager and how to contact them
- Traffic flows, parking arrangements and information on the arrival / departure of participants and public
- Location of first aid personnel, emergency equipment, emergency exits and assembly points
- The procedures to be followed for raising the alarm in an emergency or responding to an alarm.
- How to report an incident / accident

5.1.2 RISK ASSESSMENT

The Event Safety Officer will work with the EMT members to identify and mitigate any potential risks or safety issues. They will complete the event risk assessment, in consultation with the Event Management Team.

A hazard is anything with potential to cause harm. Hazards may be common to each event; but the management of the risks created by the hazards is unique to each event. The knowledge and specific details of the event provided by the event management team will be essential in managing these risks.   Results of the risk assessment must be recorded and documented.

The EMT should
1. Read through the template provided
2. Familiarise themselves with the venue and any information provided by the venue
3. Delete any items / sections from the risk assessment template which are not relevant to their event.
4. Identify and add any additional risks / hazards specific to their event
5. Discuss the risk assessment at an EMT meeting and document the controls in place and any additional measures needed.
6. Assign who will be responsible for these actions.
7. Decide who will check that these measures are in place on the day and confirm same to the Safety Officer.

8. Don't forget to have a printed copy of the risk assessment available on the event day, so the Safety Officer can confirm /tick off that any event day checks have been completed by the various team members and any additional measures the team noted were put in place.
9. Update the document as needed on the day; and add any notes on the back page.
10. Sign and return the risk assessment to an SOI member of staff at the end of the event.

5.1.3 VENUE EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN (VERP)

The purpose of this document is to enable you, as Event Manager, to have a process in place allowing your EMT to deal with emergency situations which may arise during your event. When preparing your VERP consider the following scenarios:

<u>Scenario 1:</u> The venue being used has its own emergency plan and the venue staff will take full control of the venue in the case of an emergency.

- Event Team action: If having consulted with the facility liaison the event team discovers this is the case, the event team simply needs point this out in their Emergency Response Plan. This will be the case in many venues that are being used.

<u>Scenario 2:</u> A venue is being used in which there is no existing emergency plan and/or the volunteer event team take some or all responsibility in the case of an emergency.

- Event Team action: The event team must plan for and complete all sections of the Emergency Response Plan.

The information contained in this document should be obtained prior to the actual day of the event. In some cases, you may need to update the VERP following a risk assessment on the event day and then delegate some roles and responsibilities on the morning of the event e.g. evacuation warden roles.

However, it is **important** to ensure that:

- All members of your management team (any volunteer who has a specific responsibility to ensure the smooth operation of the event) is aware of this document and its contents.
- The roles/responsibilities not already assigned prior to the event are assigned to a team member on the event day and that this document is updated accordingly. It is critical that those assigned responsibility have a good understanding of this document and what their role involves.

Tip: check with your RDO Sport to see if the venue has provided any existing documents which can be used to inform your Risk Assessment and VERP. You should consult with the Facility Liaison and where possible integrate with emergency plans already in place, making the necessary additions or modifications to cater specifically for your event.

### 5.1.4 DELAY, POSTPONEMENT OR CANCELLATION OF AN EVENT

Plans must make provision for how curtailment of an event is to be handled safely. There are four possible reasons for delaying, postponing or cancelling an event -sports technical related issues, weather related issues, event related issues or major incident/safety issues:

Please refer to the SOI Regulations Governing Special Olympics Ireland Sport 2021 - 2025 for information on the Delay, Postponement or Cancellation of an event of competition.

5.1.5 MANUAL HANDLING

Event volunteers should:

- Avoid handling loads where possible.
- Where avoiding manual handling is not possible, perform a dynamic (on the spot) risk assessment using T.I.L.E - Assess the Task, Individual capacity, Load, Environment (see image overleaf).
- Ensure the event area is always kept neat and tidy, including no cables, boxes / equipment on the floor and other possible obstacles
- Use any mechanical devices available (i.e. trolleys for transportation materials, boxes, equipment).
- Always assess a load before lifting.
- Break up large loads.
- Ask for help if you need it and where possible seek assistance – ensure team lifts are coordinated.
- Take breaks from repetitive activity.
- Consider your own capacity at the time of the activity - previous injury, current illness, tiredness, pregnancy etc., may lead to more risk for you.
- Don't feel under pressure just because others can do a task that may not be suitable for you.
- Consider factors in external environments such as wind, slippy or uneven ground, long distances to push or carry.
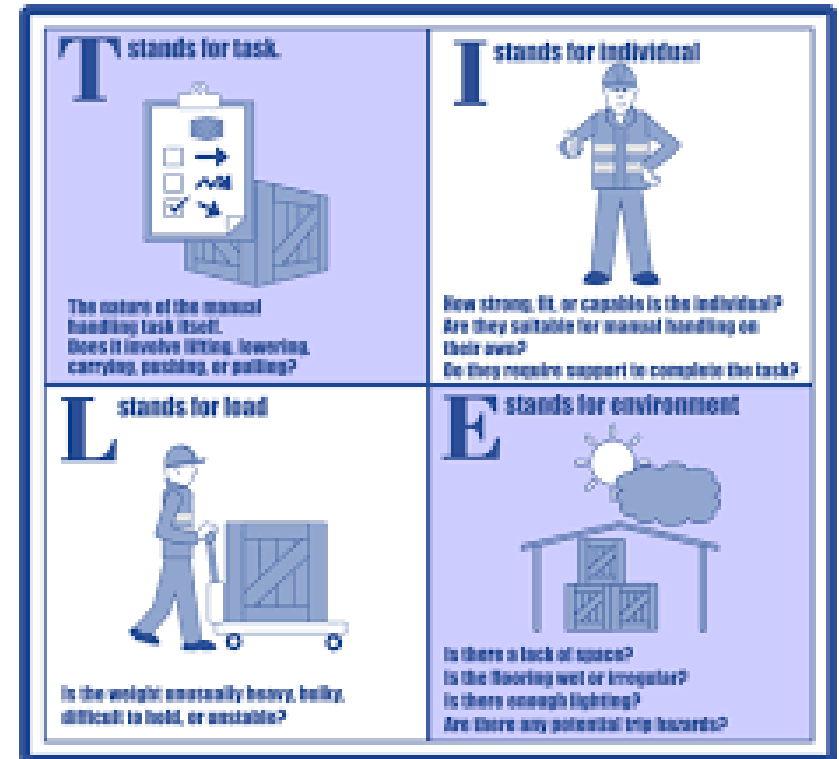
8 STEPS TO SAFE LIFTING

Fig.15
Assessing
the Load

Step 1 – Assessing the Load

Fig.16
Broad Stable Base

Step 2 – Broad Stable Base

Bend at the Knees

Step 3 – Bend at the Knees

Ensure Good Posture

Step 4 – Ensure Good Posture

Fig.19.
Keep Arms Close to Your Trunk

Step 5 – Keeps Arms Close to Your Trunk

Establish & Maintain Firm Grip

Step 6 – Establish & Maintain Firm Grip

Fig.20.
Arms Close to
the Trunk

Step 7 – Arms Close to the Trunk

Fig.21

Use Feet to Change Direction of Travel

Step 8 – Use Feed to Change Direction of Travel

5.1.6   WEATHER CONDITIONS

Weather conditions should be continued to be monitored during the event – ref Section 3.7.1

5.1.7   EVENT SERVICES

One of the main responsibilities of the Event Services Team is crowd management. This involves:

- Monitoring and managing queues
- Managing pedestrian flows e.g. directing people and assisting with circulation within the venue / event space
- Monitoring crowds and preventing overcrowding in any area
- Monitoring access to restricted areas e.g. changing areas
- Keeping gangways (i.e. corridors, walkways) and exits clear.

Event Services volunteers must be familiar with the layout of the site and the location of its facilities so that they can ensure the care, comfort and well-being of the participants and the public. They must be familiar with the Venue Emergency Response Plan, which will give details of the emergency procedures and evacuation arrangements.

Event services volunteers are assigned positions to prevent any sudden mass rush out of / away from the event to ensure that movement is orderly. If necessary, the Event Services Manager may request volunteers from other functional areas to be redeployed at this time to assist if their own duties are complete e.g. volunteers on registrations desks can be redeployed to assist event services at the end of the event.

5.1.8   FIRE SAFETY

Fire Prevention

- Ensure all volunteers are familiar with the event's fire and emergency procedures.
- Do not use fire extinguishers to prop open doors etc.
- Do not place any items on top of or in front of fire extinguishers which may hide them from view
- Keep all Fire Doors closed.
- Ensure all events areas can be evacuated safely with designated evacuation wardens.
- Do not allow any build up or rubbish or combustible materials. Paper and/or files are not placed on or near heaters or other sources of heat. No smoking is permitted.
- Ensure all fire extinguishers with approved safety signs are in place.
- Materials used for the event should have specific fire ratings (e.g. marquee lining, temporary carpets etc.) and applicable fire equipment (i.e. green running man exit signs /or extinguishers)

DO NOT OBSTRUCT ACCESS TO FIRE EXTINGUISHERS / FIRE HOSE

Means of Escape / Evacuation Routes

- Ensure all emergency exits are checked in advance of the event and throughout the event (exit doors working and open easily, exits are unobstructed etc.)
- Ensure escape routes from the emergency exits are clear – open the door and walk outside to ensure you can reach the assembly point without obstacles.
- Show your event management team and evacuation wardens / volunteers these escape routes and assembly points on your venue walkabout.
- Ensure escape routes and assembly points are communicated to all attendees

NEVER ATTEMPT TO FIGHT A FIRE:

- **IF YOU DO NOT HAVE EXTINGUISHER TRAINING**
- **YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT IS BURNING.**
- **THE FIRE IS SPREADING RAPIDLY BEYOND THE SPOT WHERE IT STARTED.**

5.1.9   MEDICAL

- The Medical team play a key role in the planning for safety at an event; and on the day the management of all medical issues are the responsibility of the medical team. The medical team will assist the Safety Officer and the Event Management Team members.
- The provision of medical personnel and services will be dependent on several factors such as age and profile of the audience, pre-existing medical histories, nature of the sport, venue layout etc. First aid services should always be provided at a minimum and a clearly visual first aid point designated for the event.

5.1.10 EQUIPMENT
- Certain key items of emergency equipment should be available at appropriate locations within the venue e.g. fire extinguishers, first aid kits, evacuation chairs. You should check the availability and location of these with your facility liaison.
- Barriers / fencing must be assembled and anchored to withstand expected loadings, anticipated weather conditions and must not create a trip hazard or obstruct any circulation, access, exit or emergency route.
- Temporary Structures such as seating or marquees should be erected by suitably qualified personnel and signed off by an appropriate authority as safe to use.

5.1.11 ENTRANCES, EXITS AND INTERNAL CIRCULATION ROUTES
- Entrances and exits must be sufficient in number to allow the desired rate of entry to and exit from the venue and be as evenly distributed as is practicable.
- Exits must not lead people into danger, for example into traffic or where a 'pinch point' is likely through crowd build-up.
- All entry and exit points should have an Event Services volunteer on duty there.
- The risk of accidents arising from movement on stairways, especially downwards, poses a considerable risk to crowds both in normal circumstances e.g. at the end of an event, or in an emergency.

5.1.12 APPROACHES AND SURROUND
- Approaches to the venue should be well-signposted from parking areas.
- The Event Plan must safeguard pedestrians from traffic movement in the vicinity of entry and exit points.
- Temporary stands or information points must not be allowed to obstruct circulation, access points or emergency routes.

5.1.13 SIGNAGE
- Safety signs, route marking and labelling of entries and exits must be large, legible and unambiguous.
- Key areas such as first aid points, safety exits, and fire equipment should be easy to see and understand.

5.2   COMMUNICATIONS

Good communication depends on having clear two-way channels of communication. Everyone in the team should know who they need to communicate with; using the team structure outlined in this guide will help the event management team to ensure this is the case, regardless of which communication tools (e.g. mobile, two-way radio, etc.) are being used.

Managers and coordinators in the event team must do their best to communicate what is happening and when, keeping the team up to date and informed. A simple tip is to encourage every person to ask themselves: "Who needs to know?"

5.2.1   Public Announcement (PA) System

The PA system used will depend on the size/type of sport and venue. Some are existing within the venue; and the facility liaison can help / briefing on how to use a fixed PA system.   If using a mobile PA system from SOI; a staff member can demonstrate use of the system prior to or before the event - please familiarise yourself with the system.

PA systems are used for:
- Opening & Closing Ceremonies
- Calling athletes to the staging area prior to competition
- Safety announcements throughout the event
- Encouragement of spectator support
- Presentation of awards
- Background music at the start of or between competition events

5.2.2   Two-way radios

The first step is to assess if two-way radios are required for your event. A member of the EMT or Communications Coordinator (if assigned) will assign, distribute and collect radios for the event. Training on use of radios will be provided to the relevant team members. Depending on the event the EMT may set up and manage a communications desk (usually located in the Event Management Office).   Specific code words and radio channels may be used for emergency and evacuations procedures.

5.2.3   STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL RADIO CALLS

```
┌─────────────────┐     ┌─────────────────┐     ┌─────────────────┐
│ THINK – about   │ ──> │ LISTEN – to     │ ──> │ PRESS & HOLD –  │
│ what you want to│     │ ensure the talk │     │ the press to talk│
│ say             │     │ group is clear  │     │ button          │
└─────────────────┘     └─────────────────┘     └─────────────────┘
                                                          │
                                                          v
┌─────────────────┐     ┌─────────────────┐     ┌─────────────────┐
│ WAIT – 1 second │ <── │ SPEAK – with    │ <── │ RELEASE – the   │
│ before speaking │     │ radio 3 inches  │     │ press to talk   │
│                 │     │ from your mouth │     │ button          │
└─────────────────┘     └─────────────────┘     └─────────────────┘
```

5.2.4   TIPS FOR USING A RADIO

- When collecting your radio ensure it has a charged battery and plug in any earpieces before turning on your radio.
- At the collection point turn on your radio and check you are on the correct channel – do a radio check with someone.
- If a child or vulnerable adult has been lost / located do not give their name out over the radio.
- Never use bad language or talk about sensitive topics on the radio – everyone can hear you!
- Remember people attending the event can also listen in – be careful what you say.
- Use agreed code words as per your briefing – for example don't say "emergency"
- Only use the radio if necessary and keep your message brief.
- Do not shout into the radio or turn the volume all the way up on your radio
- Listen to the channel and do not interrupt or cut off anyone else speaking unless it is an urgent message.
- Your environment e.g. building walls, or the weather can affect the use of radios. If you cannot reach someone relay the message to someone nearer who can then relay the message for you.

4.3.3   TERMINOLOGY

OVER – I'm finished talking, you can talk now

COPY – I heard your message and understand it

OUT – I am ending this radio conversation (Channel is now available for others to use)

GO AHEAD – Relay your message

STAND BY – Wait a minute (The person cannot fully respond right now)

NOTHING HEARD – If no reply

SAY AGAIN – Repeat your last transmission / message

AFFIRMATIVE – Yes

NEGATIVE – No

5.3   EVENT SCHEDULE

Like the set-up schedule, the event schedule must be documented so that it can be used as a communication tool for the event team. A shorter version of the schedule may also be produced for distribution to anyone attending or participating in the event.

Below is a sample of what a typical competition event day might look like. This will help put into context some of the event components required as well as giving you an indication of sample timelines to indicate how long different parts of the day could take.

Note: Times will vary depending on the event.

	What happens
8.00	Event Management Team arrives and meet a representative of the facility to open it up. The Event Manger should have a contact number (during & out-of-hours) for the facility.
8.05	The remaining Managers/Coordinators arrive for set up.
8.10	Event Manager meets all managers and coordinators to brief them and to prepare for venue set-up.
8.20-8.50	Venue is set up and made ready for the day. Some set up work might need to be completed when the full volunteer team arrive.
8.30-8.50	Volunteers will arrive and check in at the volunteer check-in desk.
9.00	Volunteer Briefing
9.00	The Officials Coordinator meets the team of Officials to brief them.
9.15	Volunteers take up their positions and complete any remaining set-up tasks.
9.30-9.40	Clubs arrive and are directed to the drop off point and parking. Event Services volunteers meet and greet them and direct them to the relevant waiting area.
9.40-9.50	The Head Coach of each club checks in his/her athletes, declares any withdrawals.
9.50	Head Coaches meeting
10.00	Opening Ceremony
10.10	Athletes competing first are called to the staging area.
10.15	Athletes are staged for competition in the staging area. This continues throughout the day.

10.30	Competition starts. Competition and Awards continue throughout the day.
12.00-14.00	Athletes and volunteers have lunch. Competition may continue so not all athletes and volunteers will eat at the same time.
16.00	End of competition and awards presentations.
16.15	Closing Ceremony takes place.
16.25-16.40	Clubs depart. Event Services volunteers coordinate the pick-up of athletes and direct vehicles leaving the venue.
16.40-17.10	Volunteer team clear out and tidy up the venue.
17.00	Each Coordinator debriefs their volunteer team. Volunteers are thanked, given the opportunity to provide feedback and their bibs are collected.
17.10	Volunteers leave.
17.10	Event Manger debriefs managers and coordinators
17.30	Event Manager signs off with facility representative and leaves

5.4   VENUE SET UP

Following the venue set up schedule the EMT will know the time required to get the venue ready for the event, perhaps even the day or evening before. This could involve moving furniture, putting up signage, setting up sports equipment and so on.

5.5   VOLUNTEER CHECK IN & BRIEFING

5.5.1   VOLUNTEER CHECK IN

Volunteers will arrive and check in at the volunteer check-in desk. At the check-in desk volunteers will be welcomed and asked to show a photo ID along with their SOI membership card or digital pass. Role assignments should be confirmed at check-in and volunteers should be directed to their briefing area and given their bib.

5.5.2   VOLUNTEER BRIEFING

It is essential that every volunteer receives a thorough briefing on their role and what is expected of them before they take up their position. Every volunteer must be comfortable that they know what they must do and what their responsibilities are.

It may be necessary, depending on the size of the event team, to brief Managers/ Coordinators and then the general volunteers working at the event. Whichever approach is taken, the briefing(s) should:
- Take place before athletes, coaches or participants arrive
- Be held in a room/space large enough for attendees with no distractions
- Be given by the Event Manager
- Cover the itinerary for the day
- Include a motivational message for the team
- Take no longer than 10 minutes, with a further 5 minutes for questions

5.6   ATHLETE CHECK IN

Clubs arrive and are directed to the drop off point and parking. Event Services volunteers meet and greet them and direct them to the relevant waiting area. The Head Coach of each club checks in his/her athletes and declares any withdrawals.

1. The Head Coach must request a Health Information report from the club Just Go Membership Champion for all athletes participating in the event from the Club. The Head Coach must have the report available to them for the duration of the event. The report can be in PDF format on a device the head coach can access, or the report can be printed.
2. The Head Coach should also request a list of the participating athlete's emergency contacts. The Head Coach must have the list available to them for the duration of the event. The list can be in PDF format on a device the head coach can access, or the list can be printed.
3. Any health or medical issues that may impact the athlete's participation on the day of an event should be brought confidentially to the attention of the Medical Coordinator prior to the start of the event.

*All events will have the necessary medical cover (first aid, ambulance etc.) appropriate to the event available for the duration including set up and tear down times.

5.7   HEAD COACHES MEETING

During this meeting, head coaches will get information about the schedule, the venue, the sport and what is expected of them and their athletes. Please refer to SOI Regulations Governing Special Olympics Ireland Sport 2021 - 2025 which includes some further information on items to be discussed at the Head Coaches meeting.

5.8   IMAGERY CONSENT (Likeness Release)

Athletes, coaches and volunteers will confirm if they do or do not consent to their photograph being taken on our Just Go system using the 'Likeness Release' credential.

Prior to the event the RDO Sport will pull a report for athletes and the RDO Volunteer will pull a "No Likeness Consent" report for coaches and volunteers to identify any person who does not wish to have their image taken at the event.   This will be noted on the relevant check in sheets.

At the event:
- If an athlete or coach has not consented; their Head Coach will be advised at the athlete check-in desk.   They will be given a wristband for the individual to wear so they can be identified by the photographer.
- If a volunteer has not consented; they will also be given a wristband at the volunteer check-in desk.
- Signs will be put up to advise the public that audience photography will be taken.
- The Event Manager will brief the photographer assigned to the event that any individual with a wristband has not consented to imagery.
- The photographer will not take photographs of these individuals; and will ask them to step out of a photograph if required. To ensure inclusion in group activities and awards, the person may also be asked to stand at the end of a group so that they can easily be cropped out of photos. With podium shots the person should not be moved, please ask the photographer for individual podium shots only.
- Should an individual change their mind about imagery consent at the event; please confirm if this is just for this event or for the event and moving forward.   If an individual is changing their consent moving forward, they should be advised to log into their profile and the Just Go system and update their preference on their 'Likeness Release' credential.

5.9   OPENING CEREMONY

A simple ceremony to provide athletes with a sense of occasion and celebration. The ceremony should incorporate:
- Welcome to all participants
- Parade of athletes (if feasible), announcing each of the club
- Reading of the Athlete's Oath by an athlete
- Reading of the Official's oath
- Raising of the Special Olympics flag (if possible)
- Short speech (by guest or Event Manager)
- Declaration of the event officially opened

Sample Opening Ceremony Plan

1. Parade Details (if feasible)

Club	Region	Athlete(s)

Parade

- Staging Area Location: _____
- Parade Route: _____

- Volunteer Locations: _____
- Parade Music Option: _____

2. Opening Ceremony Speech

Event Manager will deliver the Opening Ceremony:

- Welcome etc.
- Introduce the Competition Manager
- Safety announcements - mention the events services / medical volunteers in hi-viz / color bibs
- Event Manager will ask the people reading the oaths to come up:

Oath	Name
Athlete's Oath	
Coach's Oath	
Official's Oath	

5.10 COMPETITION

Please refer to Section 4 above for detailed information on how to run the sport / competition element of the event

5.11 CLOSING CEREMONY

The goal of the Closing Ceremony is to celebrate the achievements of all the athletes and to acknowledge and thank the volunteers and facility owner. The main elements of the Closing Ceremony are

- Parade of athletes
- Speeches
- Piece of music from the Playlist

- Ceremony should take place where appropriate on the Field of Play (FoP)
- Maximum duration should be 15 – 20 minutes
- Athlete Parade may be done Delegation by Delegation

Role	Responsibility	Who
Event Manager	Overall Responsibility - Approval and sign off on the plan	Event Manager
Operations Manager	To coordinate the plan and personnel	Operations Manager
Participant Manager	To organise volunteers in Guard of Honour along Athletes' Parade Route	People Services Manager
MC	To communicate key elements and introduce participants	Event Manager or person appointed by VM
Sound Production	To ensure PA and music set up for the ceremony.	General Operations Volunteer
Volunteer	To speak on behalf of all volunteers in the venue.	To be selected by Venue Management Team.
Athlete	To speak on behalf of all athletes	An athlete will be chosen / nominated during the weekend and the name / delegation provided to the Venue Management Team.
Venue Owner or Local Dignitary	To congratulate athletes, thank volunteers and our hosts	This is to be confirmed by SOI Staff in advance of the event.

A copy of the following scripts can be found in the toolkit –

- Event Manager
- Speech 1: Volunteer,
- Speech 2: Athlete and
- Speech 3: Venue Owner or Local Dignitary

Running Order

Element	Detail	Responsibility	Max. Duration
1	Athletes' Parade ➤ Athletes parade onto Field of Play and do lap of honour ➤ Volunteers to provide Guard of Honour ➤ Play music from playlist	People Services Sound Production	5 mins
2	Speech 1 from Volunteer ➤ Draft issued to Event Manager ➤ Speaker to be selected by Venue Management Team and will liaise with the Operations Manager	Event Manager Operations Manager	3 mins
3	Speech 2 from Athlete ➤ Draft issued to Event Manager ➤ Speaker to be selected from the Delegations and will be brought to the Event Manager by coach.	Event Manager	3 mins
4	Event Manager – Thank You	Event Manager	2 mins
5	Speech 3 from Venue Owner or Local Dignitary ➤ Draft issued to Event Manager ➤ People Services Manager / SOI Staff to liaise on the day	People Services Manager / SOI Staff	3 mins
6	Play music from playlist as athletes exit Athletes parade from the Field of Play Thank you and Goodbye	Volunteer Services Sound Production Scouts or other	3 mins
Max duration: 20 mins			

5.12 TEAR DOWN / LOAD OUT

After the team debrief at the end of an event the venue will need to be returned to its previous state. To ensure that everything is removed or replaced as required, and to ensure enough team members stay around to help with this task, the event team should have a 'tear-down schedule'. Like the set-up schedule, it should clarify what must be done, when it must be done and who is responsible for each task:

Time	Clear-out Task	Responsibility
15:00	Stack tables and chairs	Mark, Simon, Donal
15:10	Take down goalposts	John, Barry
15:25	Collect barriers/cones in car park	John, Deirdre

POST EVENT

6.1 RETURN ALL RELEVANT PAPERWORK

Where possible all paperwork should be returned to an SOI staff member while on site. If this is not possible items should be emailed to the relevant RDO or posted to your Regional Office / Special Olympics Ireland. This paperwork may include:

- Volunteer / athlete sign in sheets
- Sports related paperwork
- Completed risk assessment form
- Accident / Incident report forms
- Any other checklists used by the EMT

6.2 DEBRIEF

Again, depending on the size of the team, it may be necessary for each coordinator to debrief with general volunteers immediately when they finish (i.e. at the location where they were working for the event), and then have a full debrief with all Managers/Coordinators in a central location. Debriefing(s) should:

- Take place when athletes, coaches or participants have left
- Be held in a room/space large enough for attendees with no distractions
- Be facilitated by the Event Manager
- Cover what went well
- Cover could have gone better and needs improvement for next time
- Remind volunteers to return any relevant paperwork.
- Include recognition for and thanks to the team
- Take no longer than 15 minutes

During this debrief meeting any follow up on incident reporting can be completed in timely manner. All incident report cards and any supporting information (e.g. checklists, witness statements) must be completed and given to the Event Manager prior to leaving the event.

Following the event the EMT should host a Debrief meeting so that experiences can be shared and discussed before they are forgotten, and any suggestions or lessons learned can be passed onto SOI.

6.3   EVAULATION

Given the amount of work an event team puts into organising and running an event, it is important that there is an effort to evaluate how it went and identify how it can be improved in the future. The aim of carrying out evaluation should not be to criticize but to capture key lessons from the planning and running of the event.

For all the evaluation options, the most effective approach is to use the event management team functions to structure questions and feedback.

Evaluation Options - At the event
a) Monitor and record key event activities (i.e. whether they went according to plan or not).
b) Hold short debrief meetings at the end of the event. This will most likely be with volunteers, as part of the debrief process outlined earlier. However, if possible, even for 10 minutes, it would be very valuable to sit with a group of athletes, coaches, participants and/or family members to find out how they felt the event was run.

Evaluation Options - After the event
a) Prepare an evaluation report, which should include contributions from all key members of the event team.
The advantage of documenting the report is that it is there for reference when the event is being planned again. It would also be useful if it was submitted to the RDO Sport, so that Special Olympics Ireland as an organisation can continue to learn from the events that are happening around the island and can improve support for event teams. Any report being compiled after an event should not contain personalised criticisms of individuals or groups but should objectively focus on areas that went well and areas that can be improved next time around.

b) SOI will distribute short feedback forms on key aspects of event organisation to athletes, coaches, volunteers and/or family members.

Toolkit & Other Resources

A. TOOLKIT

This toolkit is issued as a supplementary document to be used along with the event management guide. Users are advised to read the event management guide in advance of this toolkit. This toolkit provides a pack of materials needed to help you plan and manage your event.

This guide and toolkit aim to cover many elements of events; however, it is non=exhaustive and is to be used to inform, guide and support your event team through each step of the planning, delivery and wrap-up of your event.

Within this toolkit (click here) you will find the following documents:
1. Pre-Action Plan
2. Event Day Plan
3. Event Risk Assessment
4. Venue Emergency Response Plan
5. Sports Specific Paperwork - Samples
6. Incident / Accident Form
7. PA Announcer / Ceremony Scripts
8. Sample Meeting Agendas
9. Policies & Procedures e.g. Cancellation, Postponement, Protest, Appeals, Awards etc. are found in the SOI Regulation Handbook 2022
10. Venue Site Checklist

B. ROLE DESCRIPTIONS

The following role descriptions can be found on our website here –
1. Event Management Team roles
2. Coordinator Roles
3. Sports Volunteer Roles
4. Non-Sport Volunteer Roles
5. Healthy Athlete Volunteer Roles

C. OTHER RESOURCES

i. SOI REGULATIONS GOVERNING SPECIAL OLYMPICS IRELAND SPORT 2021 - 2025

Each sport is governed by the Official Special Olympics Summer/ Winter Sports Rules, which provide the standards for Special Olympics competitions. In addition to the Sports Rules, Article 1 of the Special Olympics Official General Rules includes several provisions that apply to sports training and competitions.

This document outlines the regulations that govern all our sports. It should be used as a reference tool and be read in conjunction with the Official Special Olympics Summer/Winter Sports Rules, the National Governing Body sport specific rules and Article 1, Special
Olympics Official General Rules, where it applies.

In the event of there being a conflict between National Governing Body and Special Olympics rules, the Special Olympics rules prevail. As several versions of the Official Special Olympics Summer/ Winter Sports Rules and Special Olympics Official General Rules may exist, it is those available on the Special Olympics Ireland website that are used to govern our competitions. https://www.specialolympics.ie/sport/sports

ii. SPORT SPECIFIC NGB CONTACT INFORMATION

Contact information for each Sport Specific NGB can be found on our website -
https://www.specialolympics.ie/sport/coaching-corner/sport-specific-resources

iii. GMS TRAINING MANUAL

Further information to support this guide can be found in GMS 7 User Guide available on our website here.

iv. SAFEGUARDING POLICIES

Special Olympics Ireland is committed to the ongoing implementation of our Safeguarding policies in our clubs and at our events. We strive to foster a culture of understanding and compliance for all and to create an athlete-centred environment.   To view our **Safeguarding Policies - A guide to Best Practice, Policy and Procedure** please click here.

Special Olympics Ireland