



**Special Olympics
Maryland**

3701 Commerce Drive / Suite 103 / Baltimore, MD 21227-1651

Ph: 410-242-1515 / 800-541-7544 (in MD) / Fx: 410-242-2580

www.somd.org



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Special Olympics Inc.

for the benefit of persons

with intellectual disabilities

ATHLETE HOUSING POLICY

The health and safety of all Special Olympics Maryland participants is of paramount importance to Special Olympics Maryland. Arranging housing for overnight events involves the consideration of a variety of factors, including the varying abilities, ages and behaviors of athletes, the availability of housing and the costs associated with overnight accommodations. Athletes should feel that every Special Olympics Maryland event is a safe and positive experience and should not be fearful of other athletes, coaches or volunteers.

Gender:

Except as provided below, athletes and volunteers may not share a room with an athlete or volunteer of the opposite sex:

- a. Married athletes who are both attending the event as members of a registered delegation. This exception does not apply to the spouse of an athlete who is not participating in the event, but attending solely as a spectator.*
- b. Married volunteers who are both attending the event as members of a registered delegation. This exception does not apply if one of the volunteers is required to share a room with an athlete (other than the married couple's child), as this scenario will create a situation whereby an athlete is housed with a volunteer of the opposite sex.*
- c. Family members of the opposite sex who serve as a one-to-one chaperone for the related athlete.*
- d. Housing in a facility that has multiple private rooms in addition to living space (such as a condominium or dormitory). Both males and females may be assigned to one condominium, if necessary, but private rooms may not be shared by individuals of the opposite sex. Chaperones must also be housed on the condominium and the chaperone/athlete ratio (as outlined in the supervision section of this policy) must be maintained.*
- e. Use of barracks or other facility (such as a gym) where a large number of individuals are assigned to one room. Athletes and volunteers must be separated as much as possible by gender (for example, females on one side of the gym and males on the other side).*

Rooming assignments:

Athletes will be matched for housing based on size, level of maturity, ability and age. Family members may not stay in athlete housing unless the family member is an official member of the registered delegation and is screened in compliance with the Special Olympics Volunteer Screening Policy. Where possible, chaperones will be assigned connecting rooms to athletes who require additional assistance or supervision.

Be a fan.

Be a fan of sports and of competition and winning, of courage and determination, of dignity and strength and grace under pressure, of empowerment and of victory, of acceptance and tolerance, of inclusion, of unity and togetherness, of fun and joy, of courtesy and kindness, of inspiration. Be a fan of possibilities.

If connecting rooms are not available and the chaperone is in a room separate from the athletes for which he/she is responsible, the chaperone will have a key to the athletes' room(s) and the athletes know how to reach the chaperone at all times. Hall monitors may be used if added security is needed. Where possible, such as in condos or dorms, athletes should leave the doors to private rooms open so that chaperones can monitor each room. In the case of housing in barracks or other facility with a large number of beds in one room, chaperones should be assigned to a location in close proximity to the athletes he/she is supervising.

Sleeping Arrangement:

Each member of the delegation shall be assigned his/her own bed. An athlete may not share a bed with a chaperone unless the chaperone is a parent or sibling of the athlete and has been screened in compliance with the Special Olympics Volunteer Screening Policy. Cots and air mattresses, if permitted by facility, can be used to increase the number of beds available.

Supervision:

The chaperone/athlete ratio of at least one properly registered chaperone to every four athletes must be maintained during overnight events. Proper supervision can be maintained without having a chaperone present in the room at all times. All chaperones must be screened in accordance with the Special Olympics Volunteer Screening Policy.

Notification:

The above housing policy will be added to the Special Olympics Maryland athlete registration form as of January 1, 2012. Parents/guardians will confirm their acceptance of the athlete housing policy through signature on the athlete registration form. By December 31, 2014, all current athlete registration forms will have the parent/guardian notification section completed.

Policy Implementation:

The Vice President of Competition and Training will be responsible for securing housing that ensures compliance with this policy at all program level competition and training events. Area/County Directors and Heads of Delegations shall ensure that all chaperones comply with this policy and shall ensure compliance with the supervision, sleeping arrangement and rooming assignment sections of this policy at all competition and training events.

Compliance with this policy at all other non-competition events (i.e. fundraising, advocacy, administrative, etc) is the responsibility of the staff member in charge of the event