



Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics

Risk Management and Safety Issues

Introduction

The Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics has grown tremendously during the past decade to the point where it is the largest fundraiser for Special Olympics. Special Olympics event organizers would like to share some basic risk management techniques to ensure a safer environment for runners and special events.

Special Olympics Illinois has a corporate insurance policy that protects all Special Olympics athletes and registered volunteers from claims of bodily injury, property damage or personal injury due to their alleged negligence during the conduct of Special Olympics Illinois activities. In order for there to be an obligation to pay a claimant, negligence must be proven.

All registered Torch Run participants are considered Special Olympics Illinois volunteers while acting in a registered volunteer capacity under the direction of Special Olympics Illinois, and therefore covered by Special Olympics Illinois insurance coverage.

Unrelated to the Torch Run is the issue of liability insurance coverage for police coverage at Special Olympics events. Special Olympics Illinois does not provide Police Professional Liability insurance coverage for police officers (on or off duty) for regular duties of a police officer, such as crowd control, directing traffic or monitoring fundraising activities where alcoholic beverages are served.

If an organization would like to see written proof of Special Olympics Illinois' insurance policy, please call Sandy Nash, Senior Director of Development/Torch Run Liaison for Special Olympics Illinois at 1-800-394-0562. She can provide this documentation.

Special Olympics Sponsorship or Co-Sponsorship of a Torch Run Event

It is important to note that for the Special Olympics Illinois corporate insurance policy to provide coverage for the Torch Run and Torch Run related events, Special Olympics Illinois must sponsor or co-sponsor all events. Organizers simply informing Special Olympics Illinois about any events being planned and insuring that all risk management guidelines are followed can meet this obligation.

The form on the next page should be used for each event being planned so that Special Olympics Illinois will know about it.

Torch Run Risk Management and Safety

The following information provides suggested guidelines in setting up safe Torch Run relays:

Recruiting Runners

1. Use experienced runners for long stretches.
2. Schedule 10-12 minutes per mile for the entire leg.
3. Do not assume celebrity runners are experienced at running very long distances. Ask them exactly how far they would like to run.
4. Ask Special Olympics athletes from the local program to participate in the event.

Safety and Security

1. All areas selected for the start and stop points for a relay should be off the road in a secure area, clear of all traffic.
2. Proper parking should be arranged in an area away from where the runners are warming up.
3. Media coverage areas should be arranged so that the media have access to everything.
4. Arrangements should be made to cover intersections until all runners are safely through.
5. Any incident involving injury should be reported to the Torch Run Director and appropriate emergency personnel. All law enforcement runners and other registered volunteers are covered under Special Olympics accident medical insurance in excess of any other collectible insurance while at the direction of Special Olympics.
6. Place escort vehicles in a position to maximize runner safety.

Emergency Preparedness

1. Each support or escort vehicle should carry a basic first aid kit.
2. Each support vehicle should have two-way radio capabilities.
3. Organizers should be aware of potential medical problems inherent in running and recognize symptoms of distress.
4. Be prepared to deal with weather (extreme heat, rain, etc.).
5. Have sun lotion available.
6. Leg organizer should have an emergency plan ready to implement in case an emergency occurs.
7. Have plenty of liquids (water) available for all runners.

The Day of the Torch Run

1. The entourage should consist of one to two support vehicles and two escort vehicles (local law enforcement or Highway Patrol).
2. Runners should stay to the side of the road as much as possible or on the shoulder if it is not too rough.
3. The escort vehicle should follow the runners with emergency lights on. The driver should be provided refreshments and relieved if escorting a long distance.
4. The actual exchange of the torch should be made in an area that is safely away from traffic.
5. During the exchange, the support vehicle should park out of the way of traffic and wait until the exchange is made. When using one support vehicle, it should move ahead of the runner and escort vehicle to the next exchange point after it has picked up the previous runner.
6. If two support vehicles are available, one can leave runners off and proceed ahead. The second vehicle can stay behind and pick up runners as they finish.

What if an Emergency Occurs?

In the event of an emergency such as an illness, accident or death, the situation must be dealt with in a calm manner. The following steps should be used in dealing with emergency situations.

- Prior to any event, the Leg Leader should assemble a complete list of participant's names, who to contact in case of an emergency and officials to contact to handle an emergency.

If an accident occurs, the Leg Leader should...

1. Get medical help for the injured person(s).
2. Notify the Illinois Torch Run Director and Special Olympics Illinois President and CEO Dave Breen at 1-800-394-0562.
3. Complete a Special Olympics Incident Report form and send/fax to Special Olympics Illinois office in Normal. (A copy of the Incident Report Form and instructions for completing are on the following page.)
4. Allow emergency personnel to handle questions from the media regarding the status of the situation.
5. The Special Olympics Illinois president should handle all other questions regarding the incident.
6. If the media or anyone else asks questions that you do not have an answer for, simply say "That information is not known at this time" and refer questions to a designated spokesperson.

Torch Run Special Event Risk Management and Safety

Special events, such as fundraisers, sponsored by or co-sponsored by, or held for Special Olympics, bring unique risk exposures in addition to those that may already be present. When planning special events on behalf of the Torch Run for Special Olympics, several risk reduction techniques should be used to manage these risks.

It is not Special Olympics' intention to have volunteers with the Torch Run explaining the Special Olympics corporate insurance program to groups/individuals involved with Torch Run special events. Refer any questions or concerns that groups/individuals may have to Sandy Nash at Special Olympics Illinois (1-800-394-0562) and she can clarify any insurance issues.

The best way to determine if an event has risks that need to be reviewed by the Special Olympics insurance representatives is to complete the Torch Run event notification form and send to Sandy Nash at Special Olympics Illinois in Normal. Once she receives the form, she will review it with the insurance representatives. This form should be completed at least four weeks in advance of the event or sooner if the information is available.

Special Events Situations

- **Runners in a road race** that is a special event fundraiser are not considered volunteers for Special Olympics or the Torch Run. Therefore, Special Olympics has a waiver of release of liability for participants in a road race to sign.
- **Special Olympics does not have liquor liability coverage.** Special coverage must be arranged for events where alcoholic beverages are served. Special Olympics should assist in determining the appropriate way to handle this insurance coverage. Regardless of the special event, as long as it is associated with the Torch Run, Special Olympics must be notified when alcoholic beverages are served at an event.
- **Special Olympics has limited coverage for property of others for a Special Olympics event such as golf carts, sports equipment, tables, chairs, etc.** Special Olympics must have proof of insurance from the property owner. If this is unavailable, advise Special Olympics. Special Olympics will review the contract/agreement to make sure Special Olympics coverage applies. If not, alternative arrangements will be necessary.
- **When handling donations for the Torch Run,** it is important to send your money to Sandy Nash at Special Olympics Illinois within five working days of receiving the donation. Holding cash, checks, or other forms of a donation for more than five working days could result in the funds being lost or checks not being valid.