



Polar Plunge At Home

Best Practices

Plunge At Home participants are encouraged to be safe with their choices. Special Olympic Illinois utilizes a professional dive team in the water and emergency responders to ensure the safety of our participants at traditional Polar Plunges. Do not attempt to jump into a lake, river or any other open body of water for the Plunge At Home. Participants should not do anything that could physically harm themselves or others. Special Olympics Illinois is not responsible for any injuries that occur while participating in the Plunge At Home event.

To help ensure the safety of all participants, Special Olympics Illinois asks that all Plunge At Home participants review the following risk management recommendations and implement these recommendations when arranging how you will #BeBoldGetCold for the athletes of Special Olympics Illinois!

Risk Management Recommendations

- Do not attempt to Plunge At Home into a lake, river or any other open body of water.
- Participants should not be under the influence of alcohol when they Plunge At Home.
- Make sure you do not Plunge At Home alone. Have plunge supporters nearby to assist in case of incident or accident.
- Diving or flipping into any pool or body of water is prohibited. This applies to plunges where participants run into a body of water, jump into a pool (shallow or deep) or jump into a deep body of water.
- Each participant must agree to Special Olympics Illinois release of liability waiver prior to participating in the event. For 2021, the release of liability is the Terms and Conditions agreed to during the online registration process. Participants under the age of 18 must have a parent or guardian agree to these terms and conditions during registration. Third party registrants must agree to these terms and conditions or sign a paper waiver prior to participating in the Plunge At Home event.
- Ensure your support person is capable and willing to contact emergency personnel if necessary.
- Develop a plan to ensure that you know that each participant who enters the water, safely exits the water.
- If the participants/volunteers/spectators have to walk on frozen water to get to the plunge site, have outside experts determine that the ice is thick enough for the weight of the participants, volunteers, spectators and any equipment needed for the event. One method is to work with local DNR or a similar entity to ensure the ice is safe for the event. Please remember to reevaluate the condition of the ice throughout the event.
- If hot tubs are going to be available following the plunge, please ensure the manufacturer's safety guidelines are visible and that participants are aware of such safety recommendations. Additionally, ensure that the chemical levels for the hot tub are in line with the manufacturer's recommendation and that any extra chemicals are stored in a secured location. Don't forget to reevaluate the chemical levels throughout the event.
- If participants will be "plunging" into a pool or if hot tubs are used, there needs to be a plan in place to ensure that the ladders, decks, etc. that are used to enter and exit the pool and/or hot tub do not become slippery or covered in ice during the event.
- If space heaters (or other heating devices) are going to be used at your event, ensure that the heaters are in a location where participants, volunteers and spectators are not able to stand over or too close to the heater as not to burn themselves.
- If wear costumes during the event, costumes need to be appropriate and non-discriminatory.



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Group Gatherings and Plunges

For groups or teams planning to Plunge At Home together, please ensure you are adhering to the most up to date CDH/IDPH COVID-19 guidelines regarding number of people in attendance, social distancing and contact tracing.

- Ensure participants and spectators are informed to stay home if they are sick or have any COVID symptoms or were exposed to someone with COVID
- Ensure everyone is reminded of the proper hygiene procedures (i.e. proper hand washing procedures, covering sneezes/coughs etc.)
- Maintain 6 feet physical distancing in and out of the water at all times
- Ensure everyone wears a mask when they are not in the water. Masks should not be worn in the water and children 2 years of age and younger should not wear masks.