



Athlete Housing Policy
Effective January 1, 2014

Board Approved November 15, 2013
Board Revised January 13, 2018

The health and safety of all Special Olympics participants is of paramount importance to Special Olympics Missouri (SOMO). Participants should feel that every Special Olympics event is a safe and positive experience and should not be fearful of other athletes, coaches or volunteers.

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. SOMO is adopting the following written housing policy.

POLICY REQUIREMENTS:

- 1) Gender** – Athletes and volunteers may not share a room with an athlete or volunteer of the opposite sex with the following exceptions:
 - 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 or volunteer.
 - 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), if 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. When a Group Home requires a staff in the room and they send a staff of the opposite sex the Group Home sends a letter stating this and releases Special Olympics Missouri from any liability resulting from any incidents which may occur as a result of the rooming of chaperones with athletes of the opposite sex.
 - e. 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 will not be shared by individuals of the

opposite sex. Chaperones must also be housed in the condominium and the chaperone/athlete ratio must be maintained.

- f. 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).

2) Supervision - The chaperone/athlete ratio of at least one properly registered chaperone to every four registered 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 SOMO Volunteer Screening Policy.

- a. Housing will only be provided by SOMO based on the ratio of one properly registered chaperone to every four registered athletes unless an athlete requires one-on-one supervision. An exceptions form must be filed with the area office 1 month prior to the scheduled event for approval.
- b. All head coaches and chaperones must be at least 18 years old, and one adult, at least 21 years old, shall accompany each agency.
- c. Unified Partners may be allowed to act as chaperones provided that they meet the minimum age of 18.
- d. Unified Partners will not be counted as part of the 1 to 4 ratio of coaches to athletes unless they are under the age of 16.

3) Young Athletes (ages 3-7) – Young Athletes events that involve overnight activities require increased supervision and therefore, Young Athletes participants must be accompanied by a properly registered and screened parent, guardian or an individual designated by a parent or guardian at all overnight activities. Rooming assignments for Young Athletes should be separate from the remainder of the delegation, whenever possible (for example, separate hotel rooms).

4) Acknowledgment – Utilizing the Athlete Physical Form SOMO will secure a parent's/guardian's signature acknowledging they are aware that SOMO has a policy relative to housing arrangements and Policy is available on SOMO Website. Athletes who are legally responsible for themselves are permitted to provide acknowledgment on their own behalf.

- a. New athletes (athletes registering for the first time on or after January 1, 2014) will acknowledge the possibility of overnight stays at the time of their initial registration.
- b. Existing athletes (athletes registered prior to January 1, 2014) will acknowledge the possibility of overnight stays concurrent with their next athlete medical renewal due date.

5) Policy Implementation – This policy is in place for any event that requires overnight housing for SOMO athletes and will be the responsibility of the event planner.

6) Best Practices

a. Rooming Assignments

- Consider matching athletes based on size, level of maturity, ability and age.
- Assign connecting rooms to those athletes who require additional assistance or supervision if the chaperone will not be in the same room.

b. Sleeping Arrangements

- Hotels with 2 beds: 4 athletes of the same gender; 2 athletes of the same gender and chaperone of same gender; 2 athletes and 2 Unified Partners of the same gender. Unless athletes and Unified Partners are family members, they should not sleep in the same bed.
- Dorms/Barracks: Each participant should have their own bed and should share rooms with the same gender.
- Only chaperones and coaches that are registered for the games and have been screened in compliance with the Special Olympics U.S. Volunteer Screening Policy are allowed in SOMO housing.
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- Ensure that the chaperone has a key to the athletes' room(s)
- Ensure that the athletes know how to reach the chaperone at all times
- Consider using hall monitors
- Condo/Dorm (or other facility with multiple private rooms) – Whenever possible, leave the doors to private rooms open so that chaperones can monitor each room.
- Barracks (or other facility with a large number of beds in one room) – Whenever possible, chaperones should be assigned to a location in close proximity to the athletes he/she is supervising.

- c. Family Members are prohibited from staying in athlete housing unless the family member is an official member of the registered delegation and is screened in compliance with SOMO Volunteer Screening Policy.