

Polar Plunge Weather Safety Guidelines



SOI does not have a specific temperature or weather threshold for determining when a Polar Plunge should be canceled or modified. Programs are encouraged to make those decisions based on local conditions, expert guidance and consultation with their legal/risk management resources.

The the weather guidelines from Special Olympics, Inc. can be found below:

- SOI does not have a specific temperature or weather threshold for determining when a Polar Plunge should be canceled or modified. Programs are encouraged to:
- Consult with local experts, such as EMTs, physicians, meteorologists and emergency management, to evaluate the combination of air temperature/wind chill, water temperature, exposure time and participant considerations.
- Check with their sports team and existing weather guidelines for competition as a potential reference point. In Illinois, for example, we historically used the sports weather guidance as our standard.
- Consult with their legal counsel and Event Insurance provider (American Specialty Insurance (ASI) for US Program) specific risk management and insurance guidance.
- Remember that participant waivers alone are not sufficient. Programs should have appropriate communications, warnings and signage regarding heightened weather-related risks.
- Have a crisis management plan that specifically addresses cancellation due to inclement weather, as well as communications regarding donations and whether an event will be rescheduled.

Your insurance company's Polar Plunge Best Practices may also address broader event safety, including having emergency medical personnel onsite, safe entry and exit from the water, rescue personnel when appropriate, monitoring ice conditions, and having a clear process to account for participants entering and exiting the water. The recommendation is for Programs to make those decisions based on local conditions, expert guidance, and consultation with their legal/risk management resources.