



**POLAR
PLUNGE**®

Community Event Planning Guide - 2024

A step-by-step guide to plan and host a
Polar Plunge event in your community

Questions? Please contact Meg Ishida at mishida@specialolympics.bc.ca

Contents



- 3** What is the Polar Plunge? + About LETR & Special Olympics BC
- 4** Timeline: Polar Plunge Season
- 5** Event Planning Stages
- 6** Sample Committee Roles + Sample Event Volunteer Roles
- 7** Plunge Location Ideas
- 8** Fundraising
- 9** Promoting Your Event
- 10** Connecting with Local Athletes & Volunteers
- 11** Sponsorship vs. In-Kind Support
- 12** Safety Considerations
- 13** Contests and Prizes
- 14** Sample Schedules
- 15** Additional Resources

What is the Polar Plunge?

The Polar Plunge for Special Olympics BC is a winter fundraising event that sees individuals jump into the icy waters (or experience cold waters in other methods!) while collecting donations from friends, family members, co-workers, local business, or their community in general.

This is a signature provincial event of the BC Law Enforcement Torch Run initiative benefiting Special Olympics British Columbia (SOBC).



About LETR & Special Olympics BC



The Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics BC is an innovative initiative powered by dedicated law enforcement personnel around the world who want to help Special Olympics athletes. BC LETR members raise funds and awareness for Special Olympics BC through events and initiatives including Torch Runs, Polar Plunges, golf tournaments, and overtime drives.

Special Olympics BC is dedicated to enriching the lives of individuals with intellectual disabilities through sport.

Timeline: 2023 Polar Plunge Season

FEB 18 | Vancouver Island Polar Plunge

- Vancouver Island Polar Plunge at Gyro Beach (Saanich)

MAR 3 | Vancouver Polar Plunge

- Vancouver Polar Plunge at Kitsilano Beach

FEBRUARY

MARCH

Feb 17 to Mar 3 - VIRTUAL POLAR PLUNGE

Host your event anytime between Feb 17 and Mar 3*

*Please feel free to host an event outside these dates a necessary but be advised that assistance and marketing efforts from Special Olympics BC can only be guaranteed during this timeframe.

Event Planning Stages

- Submit [request](#) for fundraising website
- Get permits and approvals as necessary
- Secure sponsorships

- Continue to finalize event details
- Continue to promote the event and recruit participants

Plunge
Day!



STEP 1

- Recruit Planning Committee and assign roles
- Determine event details (location, date)

STEP 2

STEP 3

- Begin marketing and promotions activities to recruit participants
- Confirm logistical and operational details of the event:
 - Schedule
 - Production requirements (i.e. tents, sound equipment, power generators, stage, signage)
 - On-site activations (i.e. breakfast, warming tent, bag storage, restrooms / changerooms)
 - Volunteer requirements
 - Opening Ceremonies and awards

STEP 4

Sample Committee Roles

- **Chair / Director**
 - Oversees the overall direction of the event and ensure planning remains on track
- **Logistics and Operations Lead**
- **Public Relations and Media Liaison**
- **Sponsorship Lead**
- **Volunteer Coordinator**
- **Participant Liaison**
- **Safety Officer**

Tip: One committee member can take on multiple roles! Some committees may consist of as few as two or three people.

Sample Event Volunteer Roles

- Registration/Check-in
- Photography
- Host/MC
- Set-up and tear-down
- Bag storage attendant
- Breakfast/hot beverage station
- Opening Ceremonies support

Plunge Location Ideas

- Bodies of water
 - Oceans, lakes, rivers, ponds
 - Tip: For oceans, make sure to check tide predictions!
- Outdoor pools, above-ground pools, inflatable pools, hot tubs
- Large containers
- Fire hose
- Car wash



Tip: Things to consider when selecting your Plunge location

- If a location has a permit application process and any restrictions
- Number of participants you expect and the location's capacity, including areas for pre-Plunge activities
- Parking availability
- Accessibility by public transit
- Restroom/change room facilities
- Visibility to the public / passersby

Fundraising

Fundraising Website

- Individual community event pages will be set-up
- To obtain your event page, please complete this [FORM](#)
- Within your event page, people can register as a team or individual and receive their personal fundraising page to collect donations online
- Registration will include: waivers, incentive prize selection
- The page will track participation and funds raised
- A committee member can receive admin access to be able to: review reports, obtain participant contact information, make edits to the content on the main page, etc.

! **Tip:** Fundraising opportunities to consider incorporating into your event

- Consider a way for the general public to donate at the event
 - Cash donation boxes
 - QR codes to your event website
- Encourage your participants to fundraise
 - Provide fundraising incentive prizes and contests (see page 13)

Promoting Your Event

Within your Agency:

- Agency-wide emails
- Putting up posters around the agency
- Speaking during briefings
- Tip: Get your Chief or Senior Management to endorse the event to encourage participation

To the Public:

- Local businesses
- High schools, colleges, universities
- Sports teams
- Service clubs (i.e., Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, Knights of Columbus, etc.)
- Special guests (Mayors, MLAs, MPs, local celebrities)

To the Media:

- Pre-event promotion through the media (local newspapers, radio, television, websites)
- Event-day media coverage
- Sample press release is available in the additional resources section

On Social Media:

- Via your personal and your agency's social media accounts
- Social media graphics and suggested posts are available in the additional resources section

Connecting with Local Athletes & Volunteers

- Local Special Olympics athletes and volunteers may be interested in registering as a Plunger and/or volunteering
- If there is an Opening Ceremony, it is strongly encouraged to have an SOBC athlete speak to share their Special Olympics story
- Contact Meg to get connected to the appropriate SOBC volunteer in your community to facilitate SOBC athlete/volunteer engagement and participation



Sponsorship vs. Donations vs. In-Kind Support

A **sponsorship** is typically a cash contribution from a company or organization in exchange for brand and/or logo recognition as part of an event. A **donation** is typically a cash contribution from an individual, company, or organization in exchange for a tax receipt. Public recognition is never guaranteed for a donation, but can be freely given after the donation is made.

In-kind support refers to goods or services donated (at no cost or at a reduced cost) to support an event. This may be in exchange for brand and/or logo recognition as a sponsor of an event OR for a tax receipt. Note that if an in-kind donor is considered a sponsor, they are not eligible for a tax receipt.

When thinking about sponsorship opportunities, consider what aspects of the event can be sponsored or provided in-kind.

Examples of sponsorship opportunities:

- Event Sponsor (cash sponsorship, AV, tents, or staging rental donations or discounts,)
- Breakfast Sponsor (cash sponsorship used to purchase goods, or in-kind support)
- Coffee Sponsor (cash sponsorship used to purchase goods, or in-kind support)
- Warming Tent Sponsor (cash sponsorship)
- Contest Sponsor (cash sponsorship used to purchase goods, or in-kind support)

Safety Considerations

General Safety Considerations

- First-aid attendants
 - St. John Ambulance
- Lifeguards
- Plunge 'waves'
 - How many people per 'wave' is safe?

Other health and safety considerations:

- Availability of hand sanitizer throughout the event area
- Availability of trash/recycling bins for waste disposal
- Secure area for belongings

Contests and Prizes

Examples of Contests

- Prize draws to encourage fundraising or participant registrations
 - Weekly draws: Everyone who collects \$50 in donations this week is entered into the draw. Every team/captain who adds two new members this week is entered into the draw.
 - Social media contests: Everyone who reshares a social media post to help promote the event is entered into a draw.
- At the event: Costume contest, top individual fundraiser, top youth/student fundraiser, top team
- Each event committee is responsible for sourcing these prizes for their event

Incentive Prizes

- Incentive prizes are provided by Special Olympics BC
- Prizes are selected by participants during registration and will be delivered via Canada Post to individuals after the Polar Plunge season
- Participants will have the option to opt out of receiving a prize so that more of their funds raised goes to support Special Olympics athletes
- Entry level: minimum \$75 raised
- Level two: minimum \$250 raised
- Plunge Hero: \$1,000 or more raised

Sample Schedules

Time	Activity
7:00am	Committee arrival and set-up begins
9:00am	Volunteer Arrival
9:15am	Volunteer orientation/briefing
9:30am	Volunteers take places
10:00am	Registration Opens <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants arrive and register • Bag Check and Changing Stations are available to all Plunge participants. • VIP Warming Tent is available before the Plunge to Plungers with Green wristbands. • Participants may enjoy the pre-Plunge activities including a continental breakfast, hot beverages, vendor giveaways, and displays.
11:30am	Plunge Opening Ceremony begins
11:50am	Plungers marshalled to Plunge Area
12:00pm	First wave of Plungers enter water <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remaining groups follow
12:15pm	Plunge waves begin to conclude <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Plungers can enter VIP Warming Tent and Changing Stations, collect their belongings from Bag Check, and depart
1:00pm	Tear-down begins

Sample Opening Ceremony Run of Show

Time	Activity
11:30am	Opening Ceremony begins <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MC – welcome and introduction, thank sponsors, introduce first speaker
11:31am	First special guest speaker <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • i.e., LETR member
11:34am	MC introduces second speaker
11:35am	Second special guest speaker <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • i.e., SOBC athlete
11:38am	MC announces top fundraisers (hand out awards, if applicable)
11:41am	Costume competition (if desired)
11:45am	Safety announcements
11:50am	Plungers marshalled to Plunge Area
12:00pm	Plunge time!

Additional Resources

- Sponsorship package template
- Press release template
- Special guest invitation template
- Event poster template
- Social media graphics and sample social media posts
- Email templates (recruitment, fundraising, thank-yous)
- Photos - <https://www.flickr.com/photos/specialolympicsbc/albums/72177720306609888>
- LETR and SOBC brand guidelines

Once available, these resources can be downloaded from:

<https://specialolympicsbc.sharepoint.com/:f:/s/SOBCStaff/EoSPnvK-nlHtAuDyYe-E8gBHd69lY3YSo8ZBLuko-iog?e=2Y4Fgd>

Ready to get started? To obtain your event page, please complete this [FORM](#)