

BC Winter and BC Summer Games Travel for Participants with a Disability

BACKGROUND

Sports for athletes with a disability have been included in the BC Summer and BC Winter Games since the 1980's. Competition at the Games for athletes with a disability has included events for athletes in wheelchairs. Participants who are ambulatory generally do not have challenges utilizing charter transportation provided by the BC Games Society. Participants with a disability who require a wheelchair have the opportunity to travel on Games transportation as do all other participants.

The Provincial Sport Organizations for athletes with a disability have provided feedback that participants who are not able to transfer from their wheelchairs find travelling on transportation provided by the BC Games Society challenging. In general, the challenges relate to the comfort, hygiene, processing times at pick-up points, rest stops, and disembarkation upon arrival in the host community. These factors can negatively impact recruitment of athletes and their performance at the Games.

BC Games staff consulted with other provincial Games organizations including Alberta, Quebec, Sport Alliance of Ontario, and Newfoundland and Labrador as well as BC Disability Sports, BC Wheelchair Basketball Association, and Paralympics Ontario. In summary, Games in other provinces generally do not include sports/events for athletes with a disability in their Sport Package, however, for any given Games they may have a few athletes in wheelchairs participating in able-bodied sports. Because there are so few, these athletes are provided with mileage and other basic expenses to arrange their own transportation to the Games, not including the payments of flights. In some cases, expenses are only covered for travel that is beyond 500 km.

POLICY

If athletes with a disability (ambulatory and those unable to transfer) choose to travel to the Games on BC Games transportation, they will be required to pay the registration fee, and will be transported along with other athletes as is the current BC Games Society practice.

For athletes with a disability who are in a wheelchair **and** unable to transfer from their wheelchair, the following process will be used for travel to the Games:

- BC Games Society will provide wheelchair-accessible busses from pick-up locations that have been selected by athletes requiring this type of transportation.
- Where a wheelchair-accessible bus cannot be provided the BC Games Society will provide mileage for the individual to provide their own transportation.

- If an athlete or participant with a disability who is unable to transfer from her/his wheelchair, chooses not to utilize transportation arranged by the BC Games Society, they will do so at their own expense. In this case, the registration fee would be waived. This option is only available for athletes who are non-ambulatory and cannot be transferred from their wheelchair. If one of the coaches (Head Coach/Assistant Coach) for the zone team is required to travel with the athlete(s), BC Games will consider adding one or more additional assistant coach(es) to the zone team complimentary in order that an adult is travelling with the remaining athletes on BC Games transportation.

A written request must be submitted to the BC Games Society Event Manager responsible for Sport by the PSO prior to the registration deadline indicating the individuals involved and requesting subsequent waiving of the athlete registration fee.

This policy was written to assist athletes/participants with a disability who are in a wheelchair and unable to transfer from their wheelchair. Athletes/participants with another disability that makes travel on charter transportation arranged by the BC Games Society difficult may request this policy be applied to them. The PSO responsible must submit this request on behalf of the athlete/participant in writing prior to the registration deadline.

Notes:

- This policy applies only to locations from where BC Games travel is provided. If participants from a community/city are designated to make their own way to the Games (i.e. those in the immediate area), this policy does not apply and the participant would be responsible for her/his own travel and any expenses incurred for that travel.
- Regardless of type of travel chosen, all participants must arrive at the Accreditation Centre in person by 5:00 pm of the Thursday of the Games.

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