

How to run Accessible Sporting Events

What & Why

Access for people with disabilities can be restrictive by more than just physical barriers. Barriers can be cultural, economic, attitudinal or organisational.

Assessing the access requirements for an event requires more forward planning. The earlier that participant's needs are identified, the better the chances of effectively meeting those needs.

When organising events, contact local parasport organisations, athletes with disabilities, or experts in the field to ensure you're focusing on the right areas. This may lead to a more active planning process, including the sharing of lived experiences and increasing your knowledge.



1. Venue Access

Determine if the facility is accessible, both in terms of traveling to and entering the venue. Arrange a site visit to ascertain that the venue is appropriate. Here is a checklist of items to consider:

- Entrances / Exits
- Toilets
- Lifts
- Parking
- Surfaces (i.e. smooth, level and slip resistant)
- Staff have training to work with people with disabilities



2. Budget

- Work with disability / sports organisations to share equipment, eliminating the need to purchase your own
- Recruit volunteers with specific skills and training in working with people with disabilities
- Be sure to budget for additional supports, including:
 - Sign language interpreters, personal assistants
 - Specialised equipment (i.e. Software for people with visual impairments)
 - Portable equipment (i.e. accessible toilets, ramps, height-adjustable equipment)
 - Signage (i.e. large print, easy to read fonts, high contrast colour scheme)
 - Any other alterations or adaptations that may be needed for the participant's needs.



3. Registration

- Provide multiple registrations formats taking additional needs into consideration (i.e. visual impairments)
- Include a space where participants can list their specific needs
- Provide details for a contact person for any follow-up with questions
- Provide an information pack with details on accessibility (i.e. access, transportation, venue)



4. Support during the event

- Book all external suppliers in advance and have all staff wear name tags
- Provide a dedicated quiet room where participants can go for sensory relief
- Ensure that you have enough staff on site so everyone can take a break
- Provide copies of presentations, brochures, and event programmes in multiple formats in advance
- Ensure all speakers & facilitators use appropriate terminology
- Consider delivery methods based on the needs of participants and any necessary additional requirements



5. Space Requirement

- Ensure there is a choice of seating locations and sufficient space in walkways and between rows for wheelchair navigation and guiding blind participants. This should be taken into consideration for all workshops, breakout rooms and catering facilities
- Ensure catering is situated at accessible locations and served on counters of a suitable height
- Be aware that fixed seating attached to tables can present substantial difficulties to participants
- Consider the needs for those who require personal assistance and allot the required space for it



6. Evaluation

- Write down any lessons learned during the planning and running of the event
- Get feedback directly from the participants on the accessibility of the event
- Review with stakeholders to ensure future planning and events are more successful

