



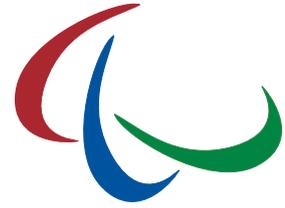
Guide to reporting on persons with an impairment

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International Paralympic Committee

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Disability and impairment

In line with the World Health Organisation, the IPC is moving away from using ‘disability’. The word reflects an interaction between features of a person’s body and features of society and normally infers that you are unable to do something.

When referring to a loss in body function or structure, or activity limitation, the term ‘impairment’ is now preferred when describing athletes. This shifts the focus more onto athletes’ abilities and what they are able to achieve.

Long term, the aspiration is that there is no need to use either word. Those who participate in Paralympic sport are quite simply athletes. The inspirational message they send every day through their incredible sporting achievements can help bring about social change.

For all broadcasting comments, impairment should be used instead of disability.

General rules

When speaking, interviewing or socialising with a person or an athlete with an impairment, here are a few general rules to remember:

- Always identify the person first and then the impairment, e.g. “an athlete with an impairment” not a “disabled athlete”. Sometimes it may not be necessary or relevant to mention the impairment, so don’t feel obliged to do so. When it is relevant, just mention what the impairment is and then move on.
- Act naturally and don’t monitor every word and action. Don’t be embarrassed if you use common expressions like “see you later” (to a person with a visual impairment) or “I’d better run along” (to someone who uses a wheelchair).
- Avoid using emotional wording like “tragic”, “afflicted”, “victim”, or “confined to a wheelchair”. Emphasise the ability and not the limitation, ie, by saying that someone “uses a wheelchair” rather than “is confined” or “is wheelchair-bound”.
- Avoid portraying people with an impairment who succeed as “extraordinary” or “superhuman”. For example, overstating the achievements of athletes with an impairment inadvertently suggests the original expectations were not high.
- Portray the person as he/she is in real life. For example, a person with an impairment might be an athlete but he/she may also be a parent, a civil engineer, a doctor, a business manager or a journalist.
- People do not want to be recipients of charity or pity. Remember that a person with an impairment isn’t necessarily chronically sick or unhealthy.



- Always ask a person with an impairment if he/she would like assistance before rushing in. Your help may not be needed. However, it is quite all right to offer help. If your assistance is needed then listen or ask for instructions.
- When talking with a person who has an impairment, speak directly to that person rather than a companion or interpreter.
- Don't forget that people with an impairment may need your patience and sufficient time to act independently. Give the person extra time to speak if they are using a communication aid or have a learning impairment.
- Ask persons with an impairment to repeat themselves if you do not understand them.
- Respect the person's personal space and remember that a wheelchair is part of a person's personal space.
- When greeting a person, if you normally shake hands, then offer the same gesture, even if the person has limited use of his/her hands or wears prosthesis. The person will let you know if a certain action is appropriate or not.
- Do not assume that a person with a physical impairment also has a hearing impairment or that his/her mental capacity is diminished in any way. Speak in a normal tone and do not use language that is condescending.



Appropriate words and phrases

Words can project images that are inaccurate and may hurt a person. In the following you can find a list of preferred terminology and appropriate wording to use when referring to athletes or people with an impairment in general.

Avoid:	Use:
<p>Disabled athlete/person</p> <p>Handicapped athlete/person</p> <p>Athlete/person with disabilities</p> <p>Athlete(s) with disabilities or disabled athlete(s)</p> <p><i>The incorrect terms are either generalisations or derogatory and offensive.</i></p>	<p>Athlete</p> <p>or (where a distinction needs to be made)</p> <p>para-athlete</p> <p>or</p> <p>athlete(s) with an impairment</p> <p>Person(s)/People with an impairment</p> <p><i>These terms refer to all athletes within the Paralympic Movement from grassroots to elite level. They are athletes first, so where possible, we should simply refer to them just as athletes. Place the athlete or person first rather than referring to his/her impairment.</i></p> <p><i>Impairment is preferred to disability. The Paralympics are all about ability, not inability. Lack of inclusion or mobility restriction are often due to external factors that can be overcome.</i></p>



<p>Athlete/Person with a vision impairment</p> <p>The blind</p>	<p>Athlete/Persons with a visual impairment / blindness and (visually impaired is also acceptable, especially to improve the flow of sentences).</p> <p><i>An athlete who has been classified as having a visual impairment</i></p>
<p>The handicapped</p> <p>The disabled</p> <p>The physically handicapped</p> <p>Person with a locomotor disability</p>	<p>Persons with a physical impairment</p> <p><i>A person who has been classified as having a physical impairment, e.g. amputees, wheelchair users, people with cerebral palsy etc.</i></p>
<p>Normal athletes</p> <p><i>Calling able-bodied people 'normal' is derogatory to people with an impairment who are equal to their able-bodied counterparts.</i></p>	<p>Able-bodied athletes</p>
<p>A paraplegic, paraplegics</p>	<p>A person with paraplegia</p>
<p>A quadriplegic, quadriplegics</p>	<p>A person with quadriplegia</p>
<p><i>A retard / the retarded</i></p>	<p>A person with an intellectual impairment</p>
<p>Spastic</p>	<p>A person with cerebral palsy</p>
<p>Abnormal, subnormal, defective, deformed</p> <p>These are negative terms which imply failure to reach personal perfection</p>	<p><i>Specify the impairment</i></p>



<p>Afflicted with</p> <p>Most people with an impairment do not see themselves as afflicted</p>	<p>Say the person has... (the impairment)</p>
<p>Confined to a wheelchair</p> <p>A wheelchair provides mobility and is not confining</p>	<p>Say uses a wheelchair</p>
<p>Cripple or crippled</p> <p>Invalid</p> <p>These words convey a negative image of a twisted ugly body</p>	<p>Say with a physical impairment</p>
<p>Disease (when used as equal to impairment)</p> <p>Many disabilities, such as cerebral palsy and spinal injuries, are not caused by any illness or disease</p>	<p>Say impairment</p>
<p>Stumps</p> <p>This has the connotations that the person's limbs were cut off like a tree</p>	<p>Say amputation</p>
<p>Suffers from, sufferer</p> <p>People with an impairment do not necessarily suffer</p>	<p>Say is/has... (an impairment)</p>
<p>Victim</p> <p>People with an impairment are not necessarily victims and usually prefer not to be perceived as such</p>	<p>Say is/has... (an impairment)</p>



In general, it is helpful to remember that impairment is a characteristic or a situation of life but does not replace life itself. Life very often proves to be stronger than any kind of impairment.

Paralympic Games terminology

Preferred term	Description/definition	Incorrect terms	Notes / explanation why incorrect
Paralympic hopeful	An athlete who is due to take part in the Paralympic Games	Paralympian / Paralympic Athlete	An athlete is only a Paralympian once he/she has taken part in a Paralympic Games
Paralympian Paralympic athlete	An athlete who has taken part in Paralympic Games.	Para-Olympian Former Paralympian	A Paralympian is never a former/ex-Paralympian. If you have taken part once, you are a Paralympian “for life”. If the person is no longer an athlete, then he/she is a former athlete.
Paralympic sport	General reference to any sport on the Paralympic programme. This is only used when referring to the sport’s involvement in the Paralympic Games.	Para-olympic sport, disabled sport, disability sport	These terms are incorrect



Para-sport or sport for athletes with an impairment	All sport for athletes with an impairment whether they feature on the Paralympic programme or not. These terms are used for all other sports events outside of the Paralympic Games.		
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Paralympic/IPC terminology

Term	Definition	Incorrect terms
IPC sport	A sport governed by the IPC (including Wheelchair Dance Sport)	
IF sport	A sport governed by an International Federation (IF)	
IOSD sport	A sport governed by an IOSD	
International Paralympic Sport Federations (IPSFs)	All bodies governing a sport on the Paralympic Programme (i.e., IFs, IOSDs, IPC). This term is only used if a distinction needs to be made with the able-bodied federation. Usually International Federation (IF) should be used.	
exhibition event	An example of a promotional opportunity / an event opportunity	
demonstration events	Sport events hosted at Paralympic competition with the purpose of becoming a sport on the Paralympic Programme.	
Paralympic Games or Paralympics (informal)	The summer and winter Games held every two years for Paralympic athletes	Para-Olympics



term)		
Paralympic Anthem	The Paralympic Anthem is played when the Paralympic flag is raised.	Paralympic hymn
Paralympic emblem	The three Agitos	
Paralympic Family	(all the persons belonging to the IPC, or Paralympic Movement)	
Paralympic flag	White flag with Paralympic emblem	
Paralympic flame	The Paralympic flame is lit on the Paralympic Torch a few days before the Paralympic Games	
Paralympic mission	To enable Paralympic athletes to achieve sporting excellence and inspire and excite the world	
Paralympic motto	“Spirit in Motion”	
Paralympic Movement	This encompasses all athletes and officials belonging to the NPCs, the IOSDs, the International Federations (IFs), the Regional Organisations (ROs), the IPC Regional Committees, the IOSD Sports, the IPC Sports Committees, IPC Councils, IPC Standing Committees, other IPC bodies and any other persons or organisations who agree to be guided by the IPC Constitution and Bylaws. The criteria for belonging to the Paralympic Movement is formal membership or recognition by the IPC, or Paralympic Family.	
Paralympic programme	Collective term for the sports events taking place at the Paralympic Games.	
Paralympic spirit	The spirit of the Paralympic Movement	



Paralympic sponsors	Sponsors of the IPC	
Paralympic sport Paralympic sports	A sport that is on the Paralympic programme	
Paralympic symbol	The three Agitos	
Paralympic Torch	The Paralympic Torch is lit a few days before the Paralympic Games.	
Paralympic torchbearer	A Paralympic Torchbearer carries the Paralympic Torch.	
Paralympic venue	This is a venue where a Paralympic sport is being held at the Paralympic Games.	
Paralympic Village	The village where the athletes live during the Paralympic Games	
IPC member	Member of the International Paralympic Committee	
IPC headquarters	The main office of the International Paralympic Committee, which is located in Bonn, Germany.	
ParalympicSport.TV	The IPC's Internet TV Channel: www.ParalympicSport.TV www.YouTube.com/ParalympicSportTV	



Event terminology

Paralympic Games

When speaking about the Paralympic Games one can use various formal or informal terms depending on the inclusion of the city and/or year. The city names and years in the examples below can be exchanged for city names of previous or upcoming Games. The Preferred term should be used on first usage, after which other formal or informal terms may be used where appropriate.

The Paralympic Games should not be referred to by the number of its edition (e.g., XI Paralympic Winter Games) or as Games of the Paralympiad.

Format	Preferred term for first usage	Other formal terms	Other informal terms
Paralympic Summer Games usage: [City] [Year] Paralympic Games [summer]	Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games	2008 Paralympic Games Beijing 2008 Paralympics Paralympic Games	Paralympics 2008 Paralympics Beijing Paralympics
Paralympic Winter Games usage: [City] [Year] Paralympic Winter Games NB: The term Paralympic Games refers only to summer editions of the Paralympic Games. Any	Vancouver 2010 Paralympic Winter Games	Vancouver 2010 Winter Paralympics Paralympic Winter Games	2010 Paralympics Vancouver Paralympics Winter Paralympics



reference to winter editions shall use the term Paralympic Winter Games.			
Paralympic and Olympic Summer Games parallel usage: [City] [Year] Olympic and Paralympic Games	Beijing 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Games		Beijing 2008 Olympics and Paralympics
Paralympic and Olympic Winter Games parallel usage: [City] [Year] Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games	Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games		Vancouver 2010 Winter Games 2010 Winter Games

The bid phase/period includes the applicant and candidate phase/period. A city is first an Applicant City (a city applying to become a Candidate City), until it has been chosen by the IOC as a Candidate City. One of the Candidate Cities then becomes the Host City.

For non-IPC sports, the format of the official event title should be used. For IPC sports the following formats should be used:

World Championships

Format	Preferred official event name	Other terms
[Year] IPC [Sport] World Championships [city]	2011 IPC Athletics World Championships Christchurch	2011 IPC Athletics World Championships in Christchurch, New Zealand



		2011 IPC Athletics Worlds 2011 IPC Athletics World Championships
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World Cups / Grand Prix

Format	Preferred official event name	Other terms
[Year or year range] IPC [Sport] World Cup ([city])	2011-12 IPC Alpine Skiing World Cup (Sestriere)	2011-12 IPC Alpine Skiing World Cup 2011-12 IPC Alpine Skiing World Cup in Sestriere, Italy.
[Year or year range] IPC [Sport] Grand Prix	2013 IPC Athletics Grand Prix	

Regional Championships

Format	Preferred official event name	Other terms
Multi-Sport: [City] [Year] [Region] Para-Games	Guangzhou 2010 Asian Para-Games	
	Guadalajara 2011 Parapan American Games	Parapans
Single sport: [Year] IPC [Sport] [Region] Championships	2012 IPC Athletics European Championships	



Open Championships: [Year] IPC [Sport] [Region] Open Championships	2009 IPC Powerlifting Asian Open Championships	
Invitational Championships: [Year] IPC [Sport] [Region] Invitational Championships	2009 IPC Powerlifting Asian Invitational Championships	

National Championships

Format	Preferred term for first usage
Multi-Sport: [Year] [Nation] Para-Games [NB: The term Paralympic Games cannot be used for a national event]	2010 German Para-Games 2010 German Para-Sport Games
Single Sport: [Year] [Nation] [Sport] Championships	2005 Egyptian Swimming Championships



State/Local Championships

Format	Preferred term for first usage
Multi-Sport: (Year) (State/Local) Para-Games	2008 Ontario Para-Games 2009 London Para-Games
Single Sport: (Year) (State/Local) (Sport) Championships	2004 Colorado Alpine Skiing Championships 2005 Barcelona Archery Championships



IPC Sport Technical Committees (the technical advisory and delivery body of an IPC sport)

IPC followed by sport, followed by Sport Technical Committee:

IPC Swimming Technical Committee

IPC Governing Board (Abbreviation: GB, but this can never be used on external documents) (replaced IPC Executive Committee)

IPC management team (i.e., IPC Headquarters staff)

IPC Anti-Doping Committee

IPC Athletes with High Support Needs Committee

IPC Audit and Finance Committee

IPC Classification Committee

IPC Development Committee

IPC Education Committee

IPC Legal and Ethics Committee

IPC Paralympic Games Committee

IPC Sports Science Committee

IPC Therapeutic Use Exemption Committee

IPC Women in Sport Committee

IPC Athletes' Council

IPC Council of IOSDs (informal: IOSDs' Council)

IPC Council of Regions (informal: Regions' Council)

IPC Sports' Council (informal: SC)

IPC Sports' Council Management Committee (informal: SCMC)

NB. Former GB members (not ex-GB members)



NPCs

The name of a NPC: *National Paralympic Committee* followed by *of*, followed by the country:

National Paralympic Committee of Rwanda (NPC Rwanda)

The country followed by *Paralympic Committee*:

Malta Paralympic Committee

However, if the brand name of the NPC is in English, then this should be used, e.g. Canadian Paralympic Committee

IPC General Assembly

[Year] IPC General Assembly:

2011 IPC General Assembly (informal: GA, but this should never be used on external copy)

Regions

A regional organisation is an independent regional organisation recognised as the sole regional representative of the IPC members within a specific region as recognised by the IPC.

Asian Paralympic Committee

European Paralympic Committee (EPC)

Oceania Paralympic Committee (OPC)

An IPC region is a regional committee established by the IPC to act as the sole representative body in that region until such time as an independent regional organisation is created.

Americas Paralympic Committee

NOTE: Asian Paralympic Committee and Americas Paralympic Committee should never be shortened to APC.



Organising Committees

Format	Preferred term for first usage	Other formal terms	Other informal terms
[City] Organising Committee of the [year] Olympic and Paralympic [Winter] Games	Vancouver Organising Committee of the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games	Vancouver 2010 Organising Committee	VANOC
	London Organising Committee of the 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games	London 2012 Organising Committee	London 2012 LOCOG
	Sochi 2014 Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games	Sochi 2014 Organising Committee	Sochi 2014 SOCOG