



2017 Athletes with Disabilities Policy

*The information listed in this policy has been created by the Houston Marathon Committee, Inc. (HMC) to promote the safety of all registered participants, sponsors, volunteers, vendors and spectators on the Chevron Houston Marathon, Aramco Houston Half Marathon, and ABB 5K official race courses. **Age limits, time limits and other registration rules also apply to the participants addressed in this policy.***

The Houston Marathon Committee reserves the right to reject any entry or disqualify any athlete if the Houston Marathon Committee officials believe that an athlete or an athlete's wheelchair presents a safety risk or fails to follow any of the policies listed below. Disqualified athletes will not receive a registration refund. In addition, the HMC reserves the right to limit the field size for Wheelchair, Handcycle, Duo Teams and Visually Impaired divisions in each event.

All participants may register online during early registration in January and during the final registration period beginning June 1, except those that qualify during the guaranteed entry period from May 5 – May 31. To view the registration schedule click [here](#). Questions or concerns about participation under these policies in the marathon, half marathon or 5K events should be directed to marathon@houstonmarathon.com.

Wheelchair Policy:

Wheelchair participant is open classes T51-T52 and T53-T53, as defined by the International Paralympic Committee, for men and women who use wheelchairs in the sport of marathon and half marathon racing. Able-bodied individuals may not participate in the Wheelchair Division.

Wheelchair Specifications:

1. Racing wheelchairs may have two (2) large wheels and up to two (2) small wheels. The small wheels must be on the front of the chair.
2. The maximum height from the ground of the main body of the wheelchair shall be at least 50 cm. No part of the wheelchair may protrude behind the vertical plane of the back edge of the rear tires.
3. The maximum diameter of the large wheel including the inflated tire shall not exceed 70 cm. The maximum diameter of the small wheel including the inflated tire shall not exceed 50 cm.
4. No mechanical gears or levers are allowed to propel the wheelchair.
5. The use of mirrors is not permitted.
6. Only hand operated, mechanical steering devices are allowed.
7. The athlete must be able to turn the front wheel(s) manually both to the left and to the right.
8. The use of fairings or similar devices specifically designed to improve the aerodynamic performance of the athlete in the wheelchair is not permitted.
9. It is the responsibility of the athlete to ensure that no part of their lower limbs can fall from their wheelchair to the ground or road during the event.

At the Start and During the Race:

1. Wheelchairs are subject to inspection by race officials before, during, and after the event.
2. If race officials believe that a wheelchair and/or the athlete using it present a safety risk, they shall be authorized to disqualify the athlete from the event.
3. Helmets are required at all times during the race.
4. Helmet sticker and timing chip must be worn on the front center of the athlete's helmet.

5. Bib must be on the back of the wheelchair frame or on the front of the racer. Bibs must be visible at all times during the race.
 6. Athletes will be disqualified for not wearing a helmet, not starting with the official start, or a flagrant false start.
 7. Wheelchairs and Handcycles will start at the same time.
 8. During the race, an athlete coming from behind in an attempt to overtake carries the responsibility of ensuring full clearance of the chair being overtaken before cutting across.
 9. If and when being passed by vehicles, all wheelchair athletes must move to the SIDE of the road until the vehicle has passed. Failure to do so may result in disqualification.
 10. Athletes who suffer a mishap may be assisted in righting and remounting their chairs.
 11. Athletes may carry their own refreshments, which may be replenished at any of the refreshment stations provided by the race organizer.
 12. The HMC shall offer prizes to the top three (3) Male and Female finishers in the marathon and half marathon.
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Handcycle Policy:

A handcycle is defined as either an arm powered, arm-trunk powered, or kneeling position, three (3) wheel device with an open frame of tubular construction. No motorized wheelchairs or "trikes" or any wheelchairs or handcycles that an athlete cannot "propel" over the marathon course by himself or herself will be accepted.

Handcycle Specifications:

1. The single wheel may be of a different diameter than the double wheels. The front wheel, or wheels, shall be steerable; the single wheel, either front or rear, shall be driven through a system comprising handgrips and a chain.
2. The handcycle shall be propelled solely, through a chainset and conventional cycle drive train, of crank arms, chainwheels, chain and gears, with handgrips replacing foot pedals. It shall be propelled from the hands, arms and upper body.
3. In the recumbent position, the athlete must have a clear line of sight. The horizontal of the athlete's eyeline must be above the crank housing/crank set, when he/she is sitting with his/her hands on the handlebars facing forward at full extent, the tip of his/her shoulder blades in contact with the backrest and his/her head in contact with the headrest, when applicable. A quick release body harness is permitted.
4. In the kneeling position, the athlete's legs and feet must be supported and protected from the ground surface.
5. Handcycles must have two independent braking systems.
6. A handcycle shall not measure more than 250 cm in length. Its maximum width shall be 70 cm overall.
7. The largest chainring shall have a guard securely fitted to protect the rider.
8. Leg and footrests shall be fitted as necessary, with a secure means of protecting static lower limbs from all moving parts.
9. Handcyclists must wear shoes or sufficiently stiff foot protection which covers completely the foot, for safety reasons, unless the handcycle has a shell/structure which allows the feet to rest with no risk of coming out. In such cases, athletes should at minimum be wearing socks. In all cases, the feet should also be fixed to the bike with some sort of device which prevents the feet from falling out of the footrest.

At the Start and During the Race:

1. Handcycles are subject to inspection by race officials before and after the event.
 2. If the race officials believe that a chair and/or the athlete using it represent a safety risk, they shall be authorized to disqualify the athlete from the event.
 3. Helmets are required at all times during the race.
 4. Helmet sticker and timing chip must be worn on the front center of the athlete's helmet.
 5. Bib must be on the back of the wheelchair frame or on the front of the racer. Bibs must be visible at all times during the race.
 6. Athletes will be disqualified for not wearing a helmet, not starting with the official start, or a flagrant false start.
 7. Wheelchairs and Handcycles will start at the same time.
 8. If and when being passed by vehicles, all handcyclists must move to the SIDE of the road until the vehicle has passed. Failure to do so may result in disqualification.
 9. Failure to follow right-of-way rules, in the discretion of the race organizer, may result in disqualification of the competitor and, possibly, his/her being barred from participation in future marathons.
 10. During the race, an athlete coming from behind in an attempt to overtake carries the responsibility of ensuring full clearance of the cycle being overtaken before cutting across.
 11. The HMC shall offer prizes to the top 3 Male and Female finishers in marathon and half marathon.
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Duo Policy

Duo Teams are defined as one person pushing an individual with a disability in a customized wheelchair. An able-bodied person may be allowed to "push" a person with a disability in a customized wheelchair, specific for outdoor road racing, provided both team members meet the requirements of the following policy:

1. The individual pushing the wheelchair must pay for their registration to participate. The person riding in the wheelchair will be paid for by the Houston Marathon Foundation.
2. One person must have a permanent disability and be secured in a customized "racing" wheelchair.
3. One person must push the person with a permanent disability the entire race distance within the official race time limit of 6:00:00 for the marathon and 4:00:00 for the half marathon.
4. The able-bodied participant must maintain contact and control with the wheelchair at all times throughout the race.
5. Only the registered able-bodied participant is allowed to propel the wheelchair forward; no outside assistance is permitted.
6. The person pushing the wheelchair must have a tether attached to the chair.
7. Only the registered person with a disability is allowed to ride in the wheelchair.
8. The person with a disability riding in the wheelchair must wear a safety helmet at all times during the race. No exceptions.
9. Motor, pedals, cranks or gears are strictly prohibited.
10. The HMC reserves the right to require that duo teams start in any corral that Race Officials deem to be the safest for all participants.
11. Duo teams must yield right-of-way to foot runners.
12. Duo teams must move to the side of road if an official race vehicle needs to pass them.
13. Duo team participants agree that they have received medical clearance to complete the marathon distance.
14. The Houston Marathon Committee reserves the right to ask for further information and to verify applications with the USATF ADA accommodation procedures.

Visually Impaired (VI) Policy

Visually Impaired runners are defined as individuals who have some degree of visual impairment or full visual impairment. The United States Association of Blind Athletes uses the following class descriptions for Blind/Visually Impaired runners:

- *Class B1 Possessing no light perception in either eye up to some light perception, but inability to recognize the shape of a hand at any distance or in any direction.*
- *Class B2 from ability to recognize the shape of a hand up to visual acuity of 20/600 and/or a visual field of less than five degrees in the better eye with the best practical eye correction.*
- *Class B3 from visual acuity above 20/600 and up to visual acuity of 20/200 and/or a visual field of less than 20 degrees and more than five degrees in the better eye with the best practical eye correction.*

The following represents the HMC Policy with regard to Visually Impaired runners participating in the marathon, half marathon and 5K events.

1. Visually impaired runner and guide (if applicable) must complete the entire race distance within the official race time limit of 6:00:00 for the marathon and 4:00:00 for the half marathon.
 2. Each visually impaired runner may use up to 2 guides. All athletes and guides must start and finish together (no relaying).
 3. Athletes are strongly encouraged to provide their own guides. In the event an athlete does not have a guide, the HMC must be contacted and the HMC shall assist with trying to provide one for the athlete. Requests must be made by August 1.
 4. If a guide is unable to finish the race with their VI athlete, they are required to drop out. Shuttles are available throughout the course and may be accessed at each Aid Station. Please see a course map for Aid station locations. If a guide does not drop out of the race, they will be banned for 2 years from participating in HMC events.
 5. Visually impaired runners shall register online during the publicized registration periods. Guides shall contact the HMC office for registration instructions. All guides must be registered by August.
 6. The Houston Marathon Foundation will pay for the cost of entry for all guides.
 7. Athletes shall start in the appropriate corral based on their estimated finish time. There may be an opportunity for a few faster VI athletes to start early with the wheelchair, handcycle and duo groups.
 8. The method of guidance is the choice of the athlete. He or she may choose to use an elbow lead, or a tether, or run free. Strapping or tying the hands of athlete and guide to one another is not permitted. The tether used must provide at least 5 cm (2 inches) length between the respective hands of guide and athlete and not longer than 20 inches. In addition, the runner may receive verbal instruction from the guide.
 9. Guides may not use a bicycle or other mechanical means of transport.
 10. The guide cannot pull the athlete, or propel the athlete forward by pushing.
 11. The guide should finish to the side of or behind the athlete.
 12. Visually impaired runners and guides are required to wear the race provided bibs.
 13. The HMC shall offer prizes to the top 3 Male and Female finishers in marathon and half marathon.
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