

Wheelchair Policy

The information listed in this policy has been created to promote the safety of all registered participants, sponsors, volunteers, vendors and spectators on the Nationwide Children's Hospital Columbus Marathon & ½ Marathon official race course.

The use of wheelchair devices by participants authorized to be on the course shall be strictly limited to competitive racing wheelchairs only.

1. The wheelchair shall have two (2) large wheels and one (1) small wheel. The small wheel must be at the front of the chair.
2. All registered wheelchair participants MUST wear a helmet to participate in the Marathon and ½ Marathon events.
3. No mechanical gears or levers are allowed to propel the wheelchair.
4. The use of mirrors is not permitted.
5. 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.
6. A limited number of registered Marathon and ½ Marathon participants may be permitted to push a wheelchair on the course with special authorization from race organizers. Email requests to darrisblackford@columbusmarathon.com

The following wheelchairs are prohibited on all of the official race courses, with the exception of number 6 above: standard basic wheelchair, electric wheelchairs, hand crank wheelchairs, and sports chairs (i.e. basketball wheelchairs) other than the aforesaid competitive racing wheelchair. Any questions or concerns about wheelchair participation should be directed to darrisblackford@columbusmarathon.com.

Note: If officials from the Nationwide Children's Hospital Columbus Marathon & ½ Marathon believe that a wheelchair or the athlete using it represents a safety risk, they may disqualify the athlete from the event and prohibit them from participating. The athlete shall not receive a registration fee refund for failing to follow the above policy and missing the opportunity to participate.

Columbus Marathon's statement regarding handcycles:

The Columbus Marathon has a history of welcoming wheeled athletes to take part in the annual event. Over the years, a number of concerns were raised about the safety of handcycles.

Some handcycles travel at speeds significantly higher than racing wheelchairs, runners and walkers. Course features, including steep hills, narrow, congested roadways and "out-and-back" sections where participants travel toward each other, raise the risk of accidents involving handcycles, runners, walkers, other wheeled athletes and spectators.

Handcycles are sanctioned by the US Handcycling Federation (www.ushf.org), and are recognized by U.S. Cycling, but not by USA Track & Field, the Columbus Marathon's sanctioning body. USATF Rule 175, #5 states: "No mechanical gears or levers shall be allowed that may be used to propel the chair." Handcycles use gears and chains, like a bicycle.

In consultation with the Columbus Division of Police, the Columbus Marathon discontinued the handcycle division in 2011. Columbus Marathon organizers are sensitive to the fact that the elimination of handcycles means some athletes might choose to compete in other events that do allow handcycles. The Columbus Marathon continues to allow athletes to compete in racing wheelchairs.