Paralympics New Zealand

**Para Sport Terminology Guide**



# Introduction

Paralympics New Zealand (PNZ) has produced this terminology guide which is designed to assist with the language of Para sport.

We hope it proves valuable to you as we work together to achieve the Paralympics New Zealand vision of “through Para sport lives will be transformed”.

# Paralympics New Zealand’s Intellectual Property

Paralympics New Zealand is the National Paralympic Committee (NPC) for New Zealand and is the primary guardian of all International Paralympic Committee Intellectual Properties (IP) in New Zealand including all Paralympic terminology, plus the symbol, flag, motto, anthem, identifications and designations, emblems and the flame and torches.

Organisations that wish to use the Paralympic properties including use of terminology are encouraged to read this guide to gain an understanding of Para sport terminology.

To request consent to use Paralympic properties in relation to events, programmes, etc run by organsiations, please contact Paralympics New Zealand.

For a full list of Para sports refer to [summer Para sports](https://paralympics.org.nz/summer/summer-para-sports/) and [winter Para sports](https://paralympics.org.nz/winter/winter-para-sports/).

# Guide to terminology usage

## Para sport based terms

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Use** | **Instead of** | **Description**  |
| Para sport e.g. Para swimming, Para cycling(refer to page 6 for a full list of Para sports):* Capital P for Para
* Space (no hyphen), then the sport name in lower case
* In Shooting Para sport, the sequence of the words is reversed
* Some disability sports do not include ‘Para’, but still follow the initial capital letter rule, e.g. Wheelchair rugby, Goalball, Boccia
 | Para-Sport, para swim, disabled swimming etc | Para sport refers to all sport for athletes with an eligible impairment, whether they feature on the Paralympic Games programme or not. The International Federation must be recognised by the IPC and therefore operate under the IPC Athlete Classifcation Code. |
| Paris 2024 Paralympic GamesMilano Cortina 2026 Paralympic WinterGames | Paralympic Games ParisParalympics Paris | Formal full name of Paralympic Winter or Summer Games in the correct format. |
| Paris 2024 ParalympicsParis 2024Milano Cortina 2026 ParalympicsMilano Cortina 2026 | 2024 ParisParalympic Winter Games Milano Cortina2026 Milano Cortina | Informal name and format for Paralympic Winter or Summer Games. For informal or subsequent usage. |
| Paralympic GamesParalympic Winter Games | Para-GamesPara-Olympics or Paraplegic OlympicsOlympics | Non year specific games term. The Paralympic Games are separate to the Olympics. |
| ParalympicsWinter Paralympics |  | Informal abbreviation for Paralympic Games. For informal or subsequent usage. |
| The Paris 2024 New Zealand Paralympic TeamThe New Zealand Paralympic Team | The Paris 2024 Paralympic Team | “Paris 2024” can be left out where the specific Paralympics doesn’t matter, or where the specific Paralympics is clear from the context. |
| London 2022 World Para Athletics ChampionshipsPNZ Para Cycling ProgrammePara Sport Manager | World Para Athletics 2022NZ Para cycling ProgrammePara sport Manager | World Championship event names have a capital on each word.They usually follow the format of city name, year, ‘World’, sport name, ‘Championships’.Programme names are all in upper case.PNZ staff titles have a capital on each word. |
| World Para AthleticsWorld Para Alpine Skiing | IPC AthleticsIPC Skiing | International Federations names are all in upper case. They usually follow the format of World, following by the sport name. |
| Classification  | Handicap, categorisation, etc | Athlete classfication is a defining feature of Para sport. It is defined as groupinig eligible athletes into sport classes according to how much their impairment affects fundamental activities for each specific sport or discipline. |
| Paralympics New ZealandPNZ | New Zealand ParalympicsPara NZ Para Olympics NZ | The only acceptable abbreviation for Paralympics New Zealand is PNZ. Not to be used in headings to start sentences and only after a full version of the term has been used. |

## Para athlete based terms

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Use** | **Instead of** | **Description**  |
| Paralympian Retired Para athlete  | Para olympian or OlympianFormer ParalympianEx-Paralympian | A Para athlete who has competed at the Paralympic Games. Paralympian is a title for life, it is not removed after retirement |
| Para athletePara swimmerParalympic hopeful | Paralympian (if have not competed at the Paralympic Games) | A Para athlete is a person with an eligible impairment who participates in Para sport. Specifically, the term if used for athletes who have not yet competed at a Paralympic Games, or for amateur athletes.The International Federation of their sport must be recognised by the IPC. |
| Disabled athlete | Cripple, handicap, invalid, impaired, etc | These nouns all have negative connatations in the English language and should not be used |
| Non-disabled athlete or Olympic athlete | An athlete without a disabilityAble-bodied athlete | As per the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) guidelines.  |

Information on impairment is of secondary importance to a Para athlete’s achievements, it is part of their story but it is not the only part and certainly not the main point. If should not be the focus of the item/article and must be a factual statement.

## Disability based terms

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Use** | **Instead of** | **Description**  |
| Disability or specific impairment e.g. has an intellectual impairment, has cerebral palsy, has a spinal injury, is an amputee, has tetraplegia, etc | Suffers from cerebral palsy, handicap, etcInflicted with cerebral palsy, handicap, etc | Disability is a statement of fact or refers to a medical conditiion. ‘Suffering’ portrays the individual as being in a weak, frail or tragic position.  |
| A Para athlete who has a spinal cord injury or a Para athlete with paraplegia | A spinal injury athete or a paraplegic | A person might have a disability or impairment but it does not define them as a person. |
| Wheelchair user | Is wheelchair bound | Terms like ‘bound’ or ‘confined’ should be avoided as they infer entrapment. Instead a wheelchair is an aid or tool, which a person uses. |
| Amputation or amputee | Stumps  | Someone ‘with an amputation’ or is an ‘amputee’ are both correct terms. However, bear in mind that sometimes people have a similar impairment but not from amputation, it may be present from birth. |
| Non-disabled person | Able-bodied person | As per Human Rights Commission guidelines. |

# Full list of Para sports

(Para has a capital P, but following words do not.)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Para sports - Summer** | **Para sports - Winter** |
| Para archery | Para alpine skiing |
| Para athletics | Para biathlon |
| Para badminton | Para cross-country skiing (cross-country is hyphenated) |
| Boccia | Para ice hockey |
| Para canoe | Para snowboard |
| Para cycling | Wheelchair curling |
| Para dance sport |  |
| Para equestrian |  |
| Blind football (previously Football 5-a-side) |  |
| Football 7-a-side |  |
| Goalball |  |
| Para judo |  |
| Para powerlifting |  |
| Para rowing |  |
| Para sailing |  |
| Shooting Para sport |  |
| Sitting volleyball |  |
| Para swimming |  |
| Para table tennis |  |
| Para taekwondo |  |
| Para triathlon |  |
| Wheelchair basketball |  |
| Wheelchair fencing |  |
| Wheelchair rugby |  |
| Wheelchair tennis |  |

# Behaviour: Being with and around disabled people

Assistance: If you see a situation that you think requires it, offer assistance, but remember it will not always be accepted. Ask if an individual would like assistance before imposing yourself on them. Your help may not be required. However, don’t feel awkward about offering to help, it is polite and acceptable to do so. If your assistance is declined on one occasion, do not be put off asking in the future. It is the same as if you were asking a non-disabled person if they want help – they might not.

Communication: Speak directly with the person rather than their companion, assistant or interpreter. Use your usual manner and tone. A physically disabled person does not necessarily have a hearing or intellectual impairment so be aware that you could sound condescending.

Behave naturally: For example, shake hands with a disabled person as you would any other person, even if they are wearing a prosthesis or have limited movement of their hand or arm.

Everyday phrases: There is no need to feel self-conscious about using everyday phrases. E.g., some people who use wheelchairs will state ‘I’m going for a walk’. It is acceptable to say to a visually impaired person ‘I’ll see you later’. Everyday phrases of this kind are unlikely to cause offence.

## Behaviour related to impairment groups

**If you are unsure of what to do in a particular situation, ask.**

Communication impairment:

* Some disabled people have additional preferred methods of communicating – respect their requirements. They may need more time, use electronic devices, and require Braille or other tools to assist them in communication.
* For specific information, ask the individual. If this is unsuccessful, ask their permission to speak with their sport assistant, parent or carer.
* Demonstrate what you mean if you are not getting the message across successfully verbally.
* Do not interrupt, correct, speak for, or finish sentences for them.

Intellectual impairment:

* If you are talking to someone with an intellectual impairment, always use simple, plain language and give them time to answer your questions. Tell the person if you did not quite understand what was said and ask them to repeat what they have said, rather than letting them believe that you have understood them.
* Do not interrupt, correct, speak for, or finish sentences for them.
* You may need to use more gestures/pictures if you are not getting the message across successfully verbally.

Visual impairment:

* When talking to a person who has visual impairment, identify yourself and others in your group.
* Provide verbal descriptions of visual things that are happening.
* Never pat or touch a guide dog while it is in the harness – just ignore it. The animal is working. Distracting it may harm its owner.
* Announce both your entrance and departure from a room.
* Let the person know if there is an obstacle that cannot be detected with their stick.
* When guiding a person with visual impairment allow them to take your arm.
* If you assist a person to a seat, guide them there and place the person’s hand on the back or arm of the chair.

Wheelchairs users:

* Be aware that a wheelchair is part of a person’s personal space. Do not lean on it or hold on to it unless offered permission to do so.
* Place yourself at eye level with the wheelchair user, by sitting down next to them.
* Do not patronise a person who uses a wheelchair by patting them on the head or shoulders.
* It is acceptable to offer to help guide the wheelchair or negotiate obstacles such as doors or steep inclines. Only push someone’s wheelchair if they have requested your help.