

First COVID case reported in Tokyo 2020 Paralympic village

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Teams from France and Cuba participating in Tokyo 2020 Paralympics arrive at Narita Airport in Narita, Chiba Prefecture [STR/JIJI Press/AFP]

Tokyo, August 19 (RHC)-- A first coronavirus case has been detected in the Paralympics village, days before the Games open, organizers say as Japan battles a record wave of infections.

The case discovered on Thursday involves a Games-related member of staff who is not resident in Japan, according to organisers, who did not give further details.

Organizers have so far reported 74 cases linked to the Paralympics, mostly among contractors and Games staff who live in Japan. Another six cases have been reported by local areas hosting teams for training camps.

There have not yet been infections reported among athletes in the village, which opened to Paralympians on Tuesday.

The Games will see about 4,400 athletes from 160 teams compete in Tokyo from August 24 to September 5. Those staying at the village will be required to undergo daily COVID-19 testing, wear face masks and maintain social distancing, as was the case during the Olympic Games, which ended on August 8th.

The Paralympics begin around two weeks after the Olympics ended, with organisers saying they were able to prevent any major spread of infection through tough anti-virus measures.

So far, 546 positive cases linked to the Olympics have been reported, and some experts have argued that holding the Games undermined the government's messaging on virus rules and contributed to a surge in domestic infections.

In recent days, Japan has recorded more than 20,000 daily virus cases, more than ever before, and the government has expanded and extended virus states of emergency to cover 13 regions until September 12.

The measure largely shortens restaurant and bar opening hours and bans them from selling alcohol, but experts have questioned the efficacy of the restrictions with cases continuing to rise.

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