



# RETURN **to** HOCKEY

COVID-19 RESPONSE



# Return to Hockey

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# Purpose

Hockey NL has worked in partnership with Hockey Canada and its member associations to develop an appropriate return to hockey plan for all of its members. Our purpose is to ensure that every phase of our return to hockey is undertaken with an abundance of caution while respecting the safety of our Players, Coaches, Officials, Administrators and Volunteers. Hockey NL's plan focuses on making the return to hockey a fun and positive experience while maintaining safety for all our members.

The Return to Hockey plan is designed to encompass the 2020-21 season. Our plan is adaptable and will be modified in response to changing conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic within Newfoundland and Labrador. By respecting physical distancing, in addition to encouraging and maintaining good hygiene in our facilities, all members of Hockey NL shall be better prepared to respond effectively.

# Disclaimer

The information in this document is not intended or implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Hockey NL, and its member associations, leagues and teams make no representation and assume no responsibility in respect of their information concerning COVID-19. The evolving nature of the current pandemic, and any information related to COVID-19, would best be obtained from the Chief Medical Office for Newfoundland & Labrador.

# Message from Hockey NL

Since we released our Return to Hockey Plan in July much has changed with respect to the *Sport Guidance* from the Chief Medical Officer of Newfoundland & Labrador. However, what has not changed is that we are still required to physically distance, carry out enhanced hygiene, and keep track of everyone who enters our facilities during Hockey NL sanctioned activities. Also, there has been a new requirement introduced on August 24<sup>th</sup> with everyone 5 years of age and older having to wear a non-medical mask inside the arenas except when they are on the actual ice surface.

Hockey NL considers this Return to Hockey document as a living document, and updates have always been anticipated. This update relaxes some of the more stringent requirements of the July document. Future updates are anticipated as our young players return to school, the annual influenza season arrives and potentially a second wave of COVID 19 arrives in our communities. If our COVID free situation continues into the fall, further relaxation of these requirements are also possible.

While we recognize the upcoming hockey season will be different from any we have experienced before, we expect this update to the Hockey NL Return to Hockey plan will provide sufficient detail for our associations and leagues to create their own plans and move forward with registration and a return to the rink for all of our members. While this update is good news, we must remain ever vigilant to ensure we do everything safely with the health of others uppermost in our minds.

It is important to recognize that many of the health and safety protocols we use are managed at the provincial level. As such, Hockey NL will take its direction from the Chief Medical Officer for Newfoundland & Labrador and follow all guidelines and recommendations established therein. Given the fluid nature of provincial public health advice, we have provided links to government resources dealing with COVID 19 in Attachment B. This will put our members in the best position to ensure they are fully up to date on local regulations. We encourage you to check these links for the most up-to-date information.

Finally, Hockey NL would like to thank our task team once again for its commitment in creating these health and safety protocols, and to ensuring we put our participants in the safest possible environment upon our return.

**Jack Lee**  
President,



# Hockey NL

## SECTION 1

# Association RTH Plans

Hockey NL's Return to Hockey plan has been developed to assist associations, leagues and teams prepare for a season with hockey under COVID-19 protocols. To launch the 2020/2021 season every association and league will have to submit their own location specific Return to Hockey plans.

The following is a summary of the guidelines that will be in place as we return to hockey for the 2020/2021 season.

- ✓ Association Return to Hockey plans should follow the same basic format as this Hockey NL Return to Hockey plan. Templates for association Return to Hockey plans are available on the Hockey NL website.
- ✓ Each association and league should assign a volunteer the role of Communications Officer to ensure all updated and relevant information is relayed to all members.
- ✓ Each association and league's own individual plan for its Return to Hockey must follow these guidelines. In places where the association's plan has to deviate from the Hockey NL Return to Hockey plan, please ensure these differences are highlighted for consideration. Hockey NL will work with individual associations to address these differences to ensure everyone can return to hockey safely.
- ✓ Each association's or leagues Return to Hockey plan will be submitted to Hockey NL for approval prior to commencing the 2020/2021 season.
- ✓ Each associations and league will describe how it will conduct volunteer training and participant orientation in all hockey with COVID-19 protocols prior to the start of the 2020/2021 season.
- ✓ Each associations and league will describe how their facilities will put in place measures to ensure physical distancing, sanitation, hygiene and safety protocols.
- ✓ Associations and league will support the facility management to ensure physical distancing and hygiene protocols are followed.

The Hockey NL COVID 19 website has 2 versions of a template to assist associations in the preparation of their own Return to Hockey plan.

## SECTION 2

# Communications Officer

Positive, open and transparent communication is vital for a safe Return to Hockey. Associations and leagues will want to ensure they understand what restrictions, controls and guidelines are in place. This information must be relayed to administrators, officials, team staff, volunteers, parents/guardians and players **in advance** to ensure the Return to Hockey experience is enjoyable.

It is recommended that associations and leagues assign a person who will be responsible to ensure all updated and relevant information is passed on to everyone within their jurisdiction.

Responsibilities can include:

- ✓ Monitoring all relevant updates from the CMO;
- ✓ Monitoring all relevant updates from Hockey NL;
- ✓ Point person for communicating any questions or concerns to Hockey NL;
- ✓ Communicating with local facilities on guidelines and updates;
- ✓ Ensuring participants are following guidelines set down by Hockey Canada, Hockey NL, their hockey association, league, or facility; and
- ✓ Ensuring any suspected COVID-19 cases are reported as required by the CMO.



It would be beneficial for the Communications Officer to communicate with their association or league executive on a regular basis to assist in facilitating updates.

## SECTION 3

# Facilities

During all phases of the Return to Hockey protocol and reopening of arenas, ongoing patience and flexibility will be required. Positive interaction will be greatly increased with a recognition and understanding of CMO direction on a variety of operational practices.

The CMO has released *Sport Guidance* and *Arena Operations Guidance* documents that must be followed. Both sets of guidance will impact our Return to Hockey plans. While as sport organizations we have to follow the *Sport Guidance*, some aspects of our operations will also be impacted by the *Arena Operations Guidance*. Our Return to Hockey plans will not be an exercise of selecting the most favoured requirement where there is a difference between the two sets of guidance. At all times, directions from the CMO will supersede any general recommendation of Hockey Canada or Hockey NL.

Associations and leagues must reinforce with their members the importance for complying with these guidelines. Our Return to Hockey will only succeed if the health and safety of everyone is uppermost in our minds.

## Facility Meeting

Positive and open communication will be an important part of returning safely to the rink. Prior to starting hockey activities, it is recommended that associations and leagues reach out to their facility management for clarification of the following:

- ✓ What are facility's guidelines and requirements specific to physical distancing?
- ✓ Are there restrictions specific to the number of people allowed in the facility?
- ✓ What are entry and/or re-entry rules?
- ✓ Are there areas that may not be accessible in the facility – main lobby, dressing rooms, observation areas, showers, washrooms, etc.?
- ✓ If dressing rooms are not available, are common areas with marked physical-distanced seating available to put on or remove skates and skate guards?
- ✓ What additional cleaning and disinfection processes have been implemented by the facility and how often are common touch points serviced?
- ✓ What accommodations can be made for participants with special needs?
- ✓ What are the general facility rules specific to practicing good hygiene?



Communication should take place throughout the 2020/2021 season to evaluate the effectiveness of the protocols in place and to make adjustments as required. Respect for the facility and all those that work within it is imperative.

## Facility Guidelines

In discussion with the facility management, associations and leagues should follow these guidelines when creating their facility specific operating protocols:

- Return to Hockey plans should incorporate the 30 minute minimum break between sessions as recommended in both the *Sport Guidance* and the *Arena Operations Guidance* documents. This requires all players, coaches, volunteers and parents/guardians (if permitted) involved in the prior session should exit the facility before the next group is permitted entry to the facility.
- When parents/guardians are not permitted in the facility, players can meet family in their vehicles (if their age permits) following physical-distancing requirements. Congregating in areas of the facility, such as the lobby, exit and parking lot is not permitted. Players and parents/guardians must follow physical-distancing guidelines when leaving facilities and in the parking lot.
- Where practical, separate entrance and exit doors should be utilized. Clear signage identifying entrances and exits should be utilized. Consider controlling the entrance and exit doors to ensure access to the facility occurs only at the designated times.
- While *Arena Operations Guidance* allow the use of dressing rooms, physically distancing still applies. Restriction on the number of people in a dressing room space may mean using multiple dressing rooms will be necessary. Mark individual player spaces based on adequate physical distancing recommendations. The maximum number of people in a dressing room is the maximum number of people period. If parents are also in the dressing room, the number of players has to be reduced accordingly. Special consideration may also be required for goaltenders.
- For age groups where parents/guardians need to assist players, limit the number of parents/guardians in the facility to one per player. Siblings are not permitted in the facility if they are not a part of the on-ice group. The elderly and those with pre-existing medical conditions should refrain from entering the facility.
- When parents are allowed in the facility, it may be best to not use the dressing rooms as physical distancing will severely limit the number of players that can use the dressing rooms.
- Hand sanitizer stations should be available inside the facility at multiple points.
- It is recommended players not shower at the facility. Follow facility guidelines specific to the use of showers. If showers are used, physical distancing must be followed.

- If there are multiple entrances to the ice surface, split the players into groups and have them space appropriately to meet physical-distancing standards at each ice surface entrance.
- Encourage participants to minimize their time in or around the facility. Following each session, participants should not remove their equipment, rather put on their shoes or skate guards and when directed vacate the facility as quickly and safely as possible.

## Facility On-Ice Guidelines

- Mark individual player spaces on the players' bench based on adequate physical distancing requirements. Remember, coaches must also physically distance.
- Only use the player benches if the number of players requiring access to the bench does not exceed the maximum number that physical distancing permits. Otherwise create an exclusion zone along the boards for players that are not actively participating in the activity.
- During skills and drills or practise sessions, minimize the amount of time when players are not moving and standing around waiting for instruction.
- Provide markings on the ice and/or along the boards to identify appropriate physical distance in locations where players congregate - in corners, around white boards, etc.
- Increase spacing of faceoff circle markings to ensure physical distancing.
- Increase the size of the goal crease markings to ensure physical distancing.
- Ensure that all contact points/surfaces are cleaned and disinfected between sessions.
- Players must wear a non-medical face mask until they put on their helmet as they are preparing to commence their on-ice sessions.
- Players are not to remove their helmets, face mask/shield and gloves during on-ice sessions.
- Players must not spit, blow their nose freely or release any bodily fluid while on the ice due to high risk of virus transmission.

## SECTION 4

# Season Structure

The most recent changes to the *Sport Guidance* document by the CMO is the basis for the current update to the Hockey NL Return to Hockey plans for Season Structure. There are some key directives in the *Sport Guidance* document that must be considered in our Return to Hockey plans.

- ✓ The potential risk of COVID-19 spread is highest when individuals are indoors, within 2 metres of each other, for more than 15 minutes, in a small space with limited ventilation, sharing equipment or food, and/or taking deep breaths (e.g. while singing, shouting or exercising).
- ✓ Sport activities may proceed as long as individuals are not required to self-isolate for any reason. Where possible, ***physical distance should be maintained.***
- ✓ While participating in indoor sports, non-medical masks must be worn inside the facility, however participants may remove their mask once the sport activity commences (e.g., as athletes leave the change room to commence warm-up activities).
- ✓ Coaches, managers and other team personnel that may be verbally interacting with athletes, should wear a non-medical mask while coaching.
- ✓ As long as the gathering size limit is adhered to (100 individuals for indoor events *provided physical distancing can be maintained*) and all other sport guidance is followed, competitions, games and tournaments may only be held if teams participating are within the boundaries of the same regional health authority (Eastern Health, Central Health, Western Health and Labrador-Grenfell Health).
- ✓ A minimum of a 30 minute break between games is recommended to allow spectators and participants' time to leave the facility and for cleaning/disinfection of equipment and frequently touched surfaces to occur, before the next teams arrive.
- ✓ Organizations must keep a record of all players, coaches, team personnel, game officials, and care/respite workers who attend each sport activity. Providing contact information is voluntary and individuals should not be denied entry to an activity if they opt not to provide. Records must be maintained for 14 days to assist with contact tracing, should it be required.

## Minor and Female Hockey

### Player Cohorts

On ice sessions limited to 30 people, including skaters, goaltenders, coaches and technical directors. The range of people is based on the limitations presented with physical distancing on the players' bench when playing games. The maximum number of 30 people on ice for skills and drills sessions or practices allows for more on-ice coaches and technical directors. Reminder that the players' benches should not be used for skills and drills sessions or practices. The minimum number of 30 people will allow for 5-on-5 *Two Line Hockey* to proceed while maintaining physical distancing on the players' benches. The 30 people will include players, coaches, on-ice officials and off-ice officials.

Grouping player cohorts into "bubbles" of 50 players may be considered. For example, associations may consider organizing their players at some or all divisions into teams of 10 players and 1 goalie. That will make it easy to consistently schedule the same 2 teams for a practice session, and alternate teams inside the bubble for 5-on-5 Two Line Hockey games.

Associations may also consider using 90 minute on-ice sessions for some age groups, combining practices and games in the same session, to relieve pressure if the amount of ice time available is reduced. Increasing the session time to 90 minutes may reduce the amount of ice time lost to the 30 minute cleaning regiment.

## Phase 1 – Parent Orientation and Coach Training

- ✓ To be completed prior to the start of actual on-ice sessions;
- ✓ Training of all coaches and volunteers in COVID-19 related protocols; and
- ✓ Orientation of all coaches and parents/guardians in the facility specific requirements and protocols that must be followed.

## Phase 2 – Player Orientation

- ✓ 2 week duration recommended to cover players who may miss the first weekend
- ✓ Skills and drills only for Under 7, Under 9 and Under 11
- ✓ Skills and drills only for Female Under 9 and Under 12
- ✓ Skills and drills and modified games of 3-on-3 or 4-on-4 for Under 13, Under 15 and Under 18
- ✓ Skills and drills and modified games of 3-on-3 or 4-on-4 for Female Under 15 and Under 18
- ✓ 2 game officials may officiate games with the assistance of a timekeeper and/or scorekeeper;
- ✓ On ice sessions limited to 30 people, including skaters, goaltenders, coaches, officials and technical directors;
- ✓ Groups remain intact for all Phase 2 sessions;

- ✓ Proper hygiene is in place; and
- ✓ All sessions limited to the local minor hockey association only, no inter-association mixing;

## Phase 3 – Games and Practices

- ✓ Phase 3 remains in place until Phase 4 approved by Hockey NL Executive Committee
- ✓ Continuation of skills and drills in practice;
- ✓ 5 on 5 Two Line Hockey games within the groupings;
- ✓ On ice sessions limited to 30 people, including skaters, goaltenders, coaches, officials and technical directors;
  - Groups of 2 teams of 10 players plus a goalie recommended for 5-on-5 Two Line Hockey
  - Physical distancing must be accomplished on the player's bench and in the dressing room;
  - If physical distancing cannot be accomplished on the players' bench consider an exclusion zone along the boards if this can be done safely;
  - When determining if physical distancing can be accomplished, ensure the coaching staff is included in the count of people on the players' benches and dressing rooms;
- ✓ Consider creating a bubble of as many as 5 groups of 10 players and a goalie to create some variety in games;
- ✓ 2 game officials may officiate games with the assistance of a timekeeper and/or scorekeeper;
- ✓ Consider penalty shots and other rule modification to minimize faceoffs and stoppages in play;
- ✓ Teams and bubbles remain intact for all Phase 3 sessions;
- ✓ Proper hygiene is in place; and
- ✓ All sessions limited to the local minor hockey association only, no inter-association mixing;

## Phase 4 – Return to Normal

- ✓ **APPROVAL FROM HOCKEY NL REQUIRED TO MOVE TO PHASE 4**
- ✓ Continuation of skills and drills in practice;
- ✓ Return to regular games, 5-on-5, typically 15 skaters per team;
- ✓ 3 game officials will officiate games with the assistance of a timekeeper and/or scorekeeper;
- ✓ Penalties to be served in the penalty box;
- ✓ Proper hygiene is in place; d

- ✓ Limited inter-association play, respecting the boundaries of the same regional health authority (Eastern Health, Central Health, Western Health and Labrador-Grenfell Health); and
- ✓ Create schedules minimizing the amount of inter-association mixing in each 2-week period;

Consider using both 60 minute and 90 minute time slots for greater flexibility in scheduling to minimize the effort required for screening people entering the facility, and to minimize the amount of time lost to the 30 minute break between sessions. Players in the older divisions, including Under 13, Under 15 (male and female) and Under 18 (male and female) are capable of utilizing a 90 minute time slot with a combined practice and game format.

For the younger divisions, Under 7, Under 9, Under 11 and Female Under 12, consider allowing a maximum of 1 parent/guardian to accompany the player into the facility. Both the player and parent/guardian must wear a non-medical face mask in the facility. Allowing parents/guardians into the facility will likely mean that dressing rooms cannot be used, and that more time between sessions may be required for cleaning and disinfecting/

Require COVID-19 Screening Form (Attachment D) to be completed by all participants **prior to each day of participation**. The use of a weekly, or monthly forms is not acceptable as the participant's health may change quickly;

Consider using an online registration system, including but not limited to the Hockey Canada online registration system. If in-person registration is absolutely required, consider multiple registration sessions with a limited number of potential registrants per session. Cashless payment should be encouraged.

If the association has a front facing office, consider the use of a barrier to separate staff/volunteers from the public. Follow all physical distancing requirements in offices and other spaces where the public interfaces with the association.

Consider if learn-to-skate programs for the youngest children makes sense if physical distancing cannot be achieved. An alternative may be to delay the start of these programs until later in the season.

## AAA Hockey

AAA Hockey is organized into divisions based on player age: The Under 18 AAA Major division has historically been a provincial league. Also, these Under 18 AAA Major players traditionally have not been returning to play in their minor hockey associations. The Under 15 and Under 13 AAA Minor divisions,

Under 13, Under 15 and Under 18 Female divisions are been tournament based with these players also participating back with their minor hockey associations.

The *Sport Guidance* restriction to limiting competitions, games and tournaments within the boundaries of the same regional health authority precludes the start of these AAA leagues.

The Under 18 AAA major teams may submit a Return to Hockey plan requesting permission to complete their player evaluations and start practicing as a group. Approval will be contingent upon the plan adequately addressing physical distancing, hygiene, contact tracing and strict adherence to the *Sport Guidelines* restrictions related to health authority boundaries. The other AAA Minor and Female divisions will hold off on player evaluations and practicing as a group until the *Sport Guidance* restriction on travel are relaxed. The coach selection process may proceed sooner to ensure teams are ready to start when province wide competitions, games and tournaments can resume.



## Phase 1 – Parent Orientation and Coach Training

- ✓ To be completed prior to the start of actual on-ice sessions;
- ✓ Completion and approval of a season plan that addresses how compliance with all COVID-19 related protocols shall be achieved;
- ✓ Training of all coaches and volunteers in COVID-19 related protocols; and
- ✓ Orientation of all coaches and parents/guardians in the facility specific requirements and protocols that must be followed.

## Phase 2 – Player Selection

- ✓ 2 week duration recommended to cover players coming from different parts of the zones, but within the boundary of the same health authority;
- ✓ On ice sessions limited to between 30 people, including skaters, goaltenders, coaches and officials;
- ✓ Proper hygiene is in place; and
- ✓ All sessions limited to the AAA team only, no inter-league competition;

## Phase 3 – Games and Practices

- ✓ Phase 3 remains in place until Phase 4 approved by Hockey NL Executive Committee
- ✓ 5 on 5 hockey two-line hockey games within the AAA team;
- ✓ On ice sessions limited to between 30 people, including skaters, goaltenders, coaches and officials;
  - Physical distancing must be accomplished on the player's bench and in the dressing room;
  - If physical distancing cannot be accomplished on the players' bench consider an exclusion zone along the boards;
  - When determining if physical distancing can be accomplished, ensure the coaching staff is included in the count;
- ✓ 2 game officials may officiate games with the assistance of a timekeeper and/or scorekeeper;
- ✓ Consider penalty shots and other rule modification to minimize faceoffs and stoppages in play;
- ✓ Proper hygiene is in place; and
- ✓ All sessions limited to the AAA team only, no inter-league competition;;

## Phase 4 – Return to Normal

- ✓ **APPROVAL FROM HOCKEY NL REQUIRED TO MOVE TO PHASE 4**
- ✓ Return to regular games, 5-on-5, typically 18 skaters per team, and 2 goaltenders;
- ✓ 3 or 4 game officials will officiate games with the assistance of a timekeeper and/or scorekeeper;
- ✓ Penalties to be served in the penalty box; and
- ✓ Proper hygiene is in place;

## Junior and Senior Hockey

Junior and Senior hockey teams can commence player evaluations and start regular practices at a time convenient to each individual team. Junior and Senior Council will work with their respective leagues to evaluate conditions that exist to determine when it is safe to Return to Hockey. When that time arrives, Junior and Senior Council will work with the leagues develop a plan and to seek the approval of the Executive Committee of Hockey NL to return to regular hockey.

## SECTION 5

# Hygiene

As we prepare for Return to Hockey, adherence and familiarity with federal and provincial guidelines and requirements specific to the prevention of COVID-19 is vital. Further, it is also important to be familiar with the guidelines specific to your facility.

Hockey NL and its members are knowledgeable and well-established administrators of hockey programs at all levels. Everyone involved in the delivery of hockey programs now need to become knowledgeable risk managers. Conditions surrounding today’s hockey programs have changed dramatically and every aspect has to be questioned to determine whether there is minimal risk to the individual participant. This is true in all aspects of our game, including how we ensure physical distancing and proper hygiene is achieved at all times.

## Public Health Authority Guidelines

The conditions related to COVID-19 are different across the country with each public health authority establishing guidelines that best fit the local conditions. Hockey NL takes its direction from the Chief Medical Officer of Newfoundland and Labrador. Knowledge of, and adherence to, the most up to date national and provincial guidelines is essential to build programming that best protects our members. Links to online resources with information related to COVID-19 are provided in Attachment B.

***The following proper hygiene recommendations are universal and when followed will assist in creating an environment that is safer for all participants in hockey activities.***

### Proper hygiene can help reduce the risk of spreading infection to others:

- Wash, wash, wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after using the washroom and when preparing food.
- Use 70% alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.

#### When coughing or sneezing:

- Cough or sneeze into a tissue or the bend of the arm, not the hand.
- Dispose of any used tissues as soon as possible in a lined waste basket and wash hands immediately.
- Avoid touching the eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.





## Participant Meeting

It is recommended to host an initial meeting with all parents/guardians/participants to review how programming will look different this season and to allow for questions. This can be done virtually if a meeting space is unavailable to ensure appropriate physical distancing for the CMO recommended maximum number of gathered people.

Topics could include:

- ✓ *Hockey under COVID-19* physical distancing and hygiene protocols;
- ✓ The importance of following all CMO and Hockey NL COVID-19 physical distancing and hygiene protocols, and action that result if these protocols are not followed.
- ✓ Facility guidelines for the number of people that are permitted on the ice at any given time. If permitted in the facility, families are asked to minimize the number of parents/guardians/spectators that attend on-ice sessions to limit the number of people in the facility;
- ✓ Presentation of screening forms (Attachment D) upon arrival;
- ✓ System(s) in place to limit the number of patrons entering and exiting the facility at one time. Work with the facility to determine the lowest risk method. Increased number of people inside the facility will require increased sanitization will reduce on-ice time available for players;
- ✓ Execution of on-ice sessions under Hockey NL Return to Hockey guidelines;
- ✓ Any parking lot restrictions for drop-off/pick-ups, rules for entering and leaving the facility and/or dressing room(s), washroom restrictions and other limitations;
- ✓ Player arrival/departure – what to expect on arrival/departure and timelines for players to enter/exit the facility;
- ✓ Importance of players arriving dressed in their equipment and if players can access dressing rooms;
- ✓ Protocols for players with special needs and goaltenders;
- ✓ Review steps for practicing good hygiene; and
- ✓ Steps to be taken if a player(s) is/are not feeling well. Any current regulations around mandatory attendance should be relaxed.

## Prior to Activity

- Complete the screening form (Appendix D);
- If a participant does not feel well, has a fever or a cold (runny nose, sore throat, cough, etc.) they should stay home and advise the designated contact. Any participant feeling unwell should refrain from attending and seek medical advice;
- Emphasize to all players the importance of **strict hygiene** before and after sessions. If possible, players should be encouraged to carry individual hand sanitizer.

*The following hand washing recommendations are universal and should be followed at all times including when participating in hockey related activities. Frequent hand washing can prevent COVID-19 spreading.*

**When running water is available, wash hands with plain soap and water and dry thoroughly.**

Follow these steps for perfectly clean hands:

- Remove jewelry, such as rings.
- Wet hands up to the wrists.
- Apply enough soap to cover hands.
- Work soap under fingernails and between joints and fingers for a minimum of 20 seconds.
- Rinse off all lather with water.
- Dry hands with a clean cloth or paper towel - take special care to dry thoroughly.
- Turn off the tap with a paper towel or cloth.

If you do not have access to water, use a 70% alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Place enough into the cupped palm of one hand to wet both hands completely. Rub the liquid into the palms, backs of hands, between fingers and under nails.

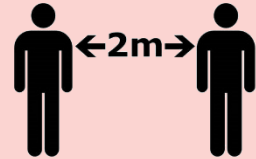
- For on-ice sessions, players should be prepared to come dressed in as much hockey equipment as possible to reduce the time at the facility before and after on-ice sessions.
- When arriving at the facility, players should be instructed to leave their hockey bags in their cars if practical.
- Teams exiting the facility should do so within 10 minutes of session completion. Plan and coordinate new arrival times to avoid members entering and exiting the facility at the same time.
- Notify and reinforce the message that players and coaches need to observe physical-distancing recommendations while on the ice.



*The following physical distancing recommendations are universal and should be followed at all times including when participating in hockey related activities.*

**Physical distancing means making changes in routines to minimize close contact with others.**

- Avoid crowded places and gatherings.
- Avoid common greetings, such as handshakes.
- Limit contact with people at higher risk (older adults and those in poor health).
- Keep a distance of at least two arm-lengths (approximately



## At Facility & During Activity

### MASKS

- Masks are required for everyone 5 years and older when in the facility. Masks can be removed just prior to entering the ice surface.
- Important information on masks can be found at:  
<https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/files/Guidance-on-Cloth-Masks-Non-Medical-Masks.pdf>
- Coaches and team staff must wear cloth masks where physical distancing is not possible, such as in the dressing room or on the bench.
- Wearing a mask alone will not prevent the spread of COVID-19. You must consistently and strictly adhere to good hygiene and public health measures, including frequent hand washing and physical distancing.

### SIGNS OF SICKNESS

- The association or league rules should be modified to ensure there is no pressure on any player to attend a hockey activity if they are feeling unwell.
- A coach should require that anyone exhibiting signs or symptoms of illness to refrain from attending;
- If participants do not feel well or have identified respiratory symptoms they **MUST** advise team staff immediately and put on a mask. They should immediately go to the designated isolation room or leave the facility and seek medical attention.



- When coughing or sneezing, cough or sneeze into a tissue or the bend of the arm, not the hand;
  - ✓ Dispose of any tissues as soon as possible in a lined waste basket and wash hands
  - ✓ Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoid contact with anyone who is exhibiting signs of infection;

## HYGIENE GUIDELINES

- Facility doors are considered high-risk touch points. Where possible, leave dressing room doors open at all times to reduce touch points and improve air circulation.
- Minimize going in and out of doors, including dressing room(s). Team staff should try and control the number of times players enter and exit dressing rooms, as this avoids contact with the door handles. Where practical, use the elbow to open.
- Sharing of food and beverages is **strictly prohibited**.
- Team warm-ups and practices should adapt to proper physical distancing; reduce the number of one-area stations, including the players congregating for instruction.
- Towels should only be on the bench under the guidance of the safety person/trainer and for emergency use only. A towel should only be used once and then taken off the bench and sanitized.
- Paper towels/tissue can be used to wipe the face or blow the nose while on the bench. Ensure tissues are properly disposed of. Garbage cans or a plastic bag should be placed close to the bench.
- Spitting and blowing the nose without tissue is absolutely forbidden.
- Players should have individually labelled water bottle. Water bottles should be pre-filled at home to reduce risk of contact exposure. Use only that water bottle when participating in the activity. Water bottles should be sanitized after each session.

**The Hockey Canada Safety Program recommends the following for the use of water bottles:**

- Good team hygiene includes ensuring all players and staff have their own water bottles to prevent the transmission of viruses and bacteria.
- Bottles should be labelled and washed after each practice or game.
- It is prohibited for officials to drink from the goaltender’s water bottle. If officials require water, they should have their own water bottle at the penalty bench.

- Pre-game and post-game handshakes are **not permitted**.
- Players should not share clothing, soap, shampoo or other personal items such as razors and towels.
- Some equipment should be sanitized (jerseys, pant shells, socks) after each on-ice session following manufacturer guidelines. It is important that players ensure equipment is kept clean.

## SECTION 6

# Officials

The following are recommended guidelines for officiating in Minor, Female, AAA, Junior and Senior hockey.

## On-Ice Officials

- Come fully dressed in uniform if possible;
- Personal towels only (officials should shower at home);
- Physical distancing is required in dressing rooms. Work with facility staff to see if more rooms are available, as well marked space/stalls within the dressing rooms. If the dressing room is small, a rotation system should be considered;
- Only game officials should be in the dressing room – no visitors;
- Officials should not wear gloves while on the ice. Bring hand sanitizer to the game and utilize it during stoppages of play when possible and at the end of each period. Avoid touching the face, nose, mouth and eyes with unclean hands. Immediately address any injuries, such as an exposed cut, before returning to the game.
- If possible, hands should be washed prior to start of each period. Have personal 70% alcohol-based hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes, or have 70% alcohol-based hand sanitizer in the penalty box for officials to use;
- The use of wire face masks is prohibited for officials. Clear face shields are required.
- Wear a non-medical mask while attending the arena. The mask can be removed when on to the ice.
- It is prohibited for officials to drink from water bottles belonging to skaters or goaltenders. If officials require water, they should have their own water bottle at the penalty bench;
- Referees should verbally greet coaches as they generally do, but should not shake hands;
- When reporting penalties, do not speak through the hole in the glass – work from a distance;
- Sharing of whistles is not permitted. Hockey NL is investigating the use of electronic whistles as a more hygienic method for stopping play.
- Equipment should be sanitized (jerseys, pant shells, etc.) after each session, following manufacturer guidelines. It is important that officials ensure equipment is kept clean; and
- Work with the facility to see if the dressing room can be cleaned and sanitized after each use



## Off-Ice Officials

- Scorekeepers and/or timekeepers must wear a non-medical mask inside the building (it may be required by the facility);
- Off-ice officials are recommended to have personal 70% alcohol-based hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes to clean and disinfect the score clock equipment/penalty bench, gate handles, and other surfaces prior to each game. Handles to doors going to the ice are high-touch areas and proper hygiene and cleaning is important;
- Physical distancing must be practiced, and it is important to work with the facility to plan the best way to incorporate into the space being used.
- Off-ice officials are not to open and close penalty box gates. On-ice officials and players must open and close the penalty box gates.

## SECTION 7

# Insurance

Under Hockey Canada’s current General Liability policy, the following is the definition for ‘bodily injury’:

**“Bodily Injury” means bodily injury, sickness, disease, mental injury, mental anguish or nervous shock sustained by a person, including death resulting from any of these at any time.**

COVID-19 would fall within this definition under disease.

Liability claims against Hockey Canada need to be proven by the third party, therefore continuing to update and enforce risk-management guidelines with the emergence of new risks, such as COVID-19, are imperative. Hockey Canada and its branches are actively working on updating risk-management protocols related to Return to Hockey guidelines post-COVID-19.

As with all claims, the insurance company would investigate claims presented against any member of Hockey Canada that falls within the ‘bodily injury’ definition and would confirm coverage based on the framing of the allegation(s).

It will also be important to review all contracts for facilities. They may contain a new clause absolving the municipality/private facility owners of any liability related to COVID-19.

New contracts for facilities will need to be carefully scrutinized by members given that associations and leagues may have little control over the cleaning/sanitizing procedures of rented premises. Associations and leagues should not be expected to take on **ALL** liability related to COVID-19 in the facilities they utilize.

Finally, it should be noted that many insurance companies are implementing Communicable Disease/COVID-19 exclusions on all policies either immediately, or upon renewal. Hockey Canada can advise that AIG, who is Hockey Canada’s primary General Liability insurer, has agreed to waive this exclusion in the General Liability policy until Sept. 1, 2023. Hockey Canada will NOT have this exclusion in its policy until that date, at the earliest.

## Attachment A

# Modified Game Format

As we move through the various phases of Return to Hockey, associations and leagues can introduce modified games to their programming to give players an opportunity to put into action the new skills that they are developing. Older players are more capable of playing 3-on-3 hockey effectively, while younger players may need to play a 4-on-4 or 5-on-5 format.

## Roster Size

- ✓ Teams will typically consist of 7 – 10 players plus a goalie,
- ✓ Number of players will vary depending on how many players can be sat physically distancing on the players' bench,
- ✓ Players on the bench should be approximately 1.5 times as many players on the ice to ensure players get an extra shift off the ice to recover as required, and
- ✓ Only 1 coach or HCSP on the player's bench, wearing a mask.

## Game Time

- ✓ Games will typically be two 15-minute periods with an approximate 5-minute break between periods,
- ✓ Run-time play, with 1-minute shift change buzzer.

## Rules of Play

- ✓ **NON-CONTACT** hockey,
- ✓ Play starts with the home team starting play from behind their net and advancing the puck towards their blue line, at which time their opponents who are on their side of the center line can then move across center to try to disrupt the play,
- ✓ Same procedure to start the 2<sup>nd</sup> period, except the away team starts with puck possession,
- ✓ Shift changes “on the fly” at every 1 minute buzzer,
- ✓ Puck possession must be given up immediately on the buzzer,
- ✓ The puck will be LIVE at all times so it is important that shift changes are done as quickly as possible,
- ✓ Touch-up off sides will be observed,
- ✓ Play stops on the whistle for persistently violating physical distancing, icing, puck covered by goalie and goals,
- ✓ The attacking team must leave the defending zone and return to their side of center ice on the whistle,
- ✓ After play stoppages, the defending team must start from behind their net and advance the puck toward their blue line, at which time their opponents can move across center to try to disrupt the play, and
- ✓ No penalties, penalty shots for minor penalties, game ejection for major penalties,

Game format can be modified to accommodate the age and skill level of players, along with the needs of the association or league. The objective is to provide a fun and entertaining game that promotes speed and allows play to develop without violating the personal space of other players.



## Attachment B

# Online Resources

Government of NL COVID-19 Resources

<https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/resources/>

Government of NL Sport Guidance

<https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/information-sheets-for-businesses-and-workplaces/sport-guidance/>

Government of NL Arena Operations Guidance

<https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/information-sheets-for-businesses-and-workplaces/arena-operations-guidance/>

Hockey Canada Return to Hockey Resources

<https://www.hockeycanada.ca/en-ca/exclusive/return-to-hockey>

Hockey NL-COVID-19 Resources

<http://hockeynl.ca/covid-19/>

Use of Masks

<https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/files/Guidance-on-Cloth-Masks-Non-Medical-Masks.pdf>

## Attachment C

# COVID-19 Related Symptoms

The following are recommended guidelines for team staff and parents/guardians regarding participants who are sick or showing symptoms of COVID-19. It is important to remember that CMO guidelines and advice from physicians must be followed in any situation where a participant is sick. COVID-19 affects people in different ways. Most infected people will develop mild to moderate illness and recover without hospitalization.

**Most common symptoms:**

- ✓ Fever
- ✓ Dry cough
- ✓ Shortness of breath

**Less common symptoms:**

- ✓ Runny nose
- ✓ Aches and pains
- ✓ Sore throat
- ✓ Diarrhea
- ✓ Conjunctivitis
- ✓ Headache
- ✓ Loss of taste and/or smell
- ✓ Skin rash, or discolouration of fingers, toes, and feet

**Serious symptoms:**

- ✓ Difficulty breathing
- ✓ Chest pain or pressure
- ✓ Loss of speech or movement

Seek immediate medical attention if you have serious symptoms. Always call before visiting your physician or health facility.

On average, it takes 5-6 days from infection for symptoms to show, but it can take up to 14 days.

Attachment D

# COVID-19 Screening Form

Complete the following questionnaire prior to entering the facility and present the completed form as you enter. The questions are relevant to the player, volunteer and all members of the family “bubble”. You should refrain from entering the facility if you or any member of your family “bubble” are experiencing potential COVID-19 symptoms.

Player’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Session Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Session Time: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Have you had a cold or flu or are you displaying any signs of COVID19 and/or flu-like symptoms?  
 Yes       No
2. Do you have a fever, new onset of cough, worsening chronic cough, runny nose, sore throat, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing?  
 Yes       No
3. Have you been diagnosed with Covid-19 or had close contact with a confirmed case of Covid-19?  
 Yes       No
4. Are you experiencing any of the following: confusion, falls, acute functional decline, or worsening of chronic conditions?  
 Yes       No
5. Have you returned from outside the “Atlantic Bubble” (including mainland Canada) in the past 14 days?  
 Yes       No
6. Have you had close contact with anyone suffering from acute respiratory illness or travelled outside of the “Atlantic Bubble” in the past 14 days?  
 Yes       No
7. In the past 14 days, at work, school or elsewhere, did you have close contact with someone who has a probable or confirmed case of COVID19?  
 Yes       No
8. In the past 14 days have you been directed by Public Health to self-isolate?  
 Yes       No

**Please share your completed questionnaire with the screener. If you answer “YES” to any of the above, you are not permitted to enter the facility. If you answer “NO” to all the above, you can enter the facility when instructed to do so.**