



ALBERTA

UPDATED

OCTOBER 2, 2020



RETURN TO HOCKEY



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1 INTRODUCTION

The Return to Hockey Plan is current as of October 2, 2020.

The current edition of the Plan reflects the most recent information published by the Government of Alberta in its [Guidance for Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation – Stage 2](#) document, and aligns with Hockey Canada's Return to Hockey Safety Guidelines in focusing on the safety and wellbeing of all participants.

All timelines within this plan are subject to change based on Hockey Alberta's evaluation of environmental factors and changes to the Government of Alberta's Relaunch Plan. Updated versions of the Plan will be published and posted to the [Hockey Alberta website](#).

The information in this document is not a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. The knowledge and circumstances around COVID-19 are changing constantly and Hockey Alberta recommends that the [Government of Alberta COVID-19 site](#) be accessed for the most up to date information.

WHAT HAS BEEN UPDATED?

The following updates are included in the **OCTOBER 2 VERSION** of the Return to Hockey Plan:

1. In the Return to Hockey Programming section (Section 2): updated timelines and program options for all levels of hockey.
 2. In Protocols and Safety (Section 3): a new Game Considerations Checklist for host teams.
 3. In Communications (Section 4): an updated Hockey Alberta FAQ document.
 4. In On-Ice Officials (Section 7): updated information on clinics and assigning, and a link to the On-Ice Officials Return to Hockey Plan.
 5. Appendices have been removed (and relocated to the Hockey Alberta website) or renumbered.
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WHO TO CONTACT?

Hockey Alberta will be undertaking member engagement strategies to help support member organizations as they prepare for the implementation of each Return to Hockey component.

Specific questions can be directed to appropriate Hockey Alberta senior management based on topic:

- General – Drew Dixon (ddixon@hockeyalberta.ca)
- On-Ice Session Planning – Justin Fesyk (jfesyk@hockeyalberta.ca)
- Safety Guidelines and Facilities – Mike Klass (mklass@hockeyalberta.ca)
- Sanctioning and Registration – Kevin Macrae (kmacrae@hockeyalberta.ca)
- Member Messaging – Brad Lyon (blyon@hockeyalberta.ca)



2 RETURN TO HOCKEY PROGRAMMING

OVERVIEW

Hockey Alberta's Return to Hockey Plan is based on guidelines outlined in Stage 2 of the Government of Alberta's Relaunch, and is comprised of activity components to help organizations prepare for the return to regularly scheduled hockey within a league structure. The Return to Hockey Plan's components are:

- **Development Season:** Hockey Alberta Member organizations can take player registrations and, as soon as they have ice, start to sort players into similar skill level groupings in preparation for a smooth transition to a competitive model once Government of Alberta guidelines permit. Programming can be operated using either Physical Distancing or Cohorting.
- **Modified Competition Season:** Hockey Alberta and our sanctioned Leagues have a plan in place for a transition into a Modified Competition Season. Competition cohorts (pairs or groups of Teams consisting of a maximum of 50 total people) will be scheduled to participate in league play against each other for a defined timeframe. Certified on-ice officials will be used during the Modified Competition Season. For more information on Officials, see Section 7.
- **Regular Season:** When Government of Alberta guidelines allow, the traditional hockey season model will be eligible to return. Hockey Alberta will work with Members and Leagues to return to play in a safe and productive manner.

The Return to Hockey Plan provides ideas and examples for Hockey Alberta Members as they set up on- and off-ice training activities. The intent is for our Members to offer hockey development and competition for players in a safe environment as we await a return to the traditional hockey season model. Launch dates for a component may differ depending on the level of hockey (Senior, Junior, Elite, Minor etc.). Communication is integral to ensure everyone knows the structure and guidelines being used.

Hockey activities may be planned and operated by using either (or a combination) of these formats:

1. Physical Distancing
2. Cohorting

To obtain sanctioning from Hockey Alberta, all programs MUST abide by the guidelines provided herein (which are based on the Government of Alberta and Hockey Canada's Safety and Protocols). If the guidelines are not followed, Hockey Alberta reserves the right to remove or suspend sanctioning.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Physical Distancing is an integral part of the Government of Alberta's Relaunch Plan. Practicing physical distancing in an activity helps to reduce the risk of transmission as well as allows participants more flexibility to participate in other activities.

See Government of Alberta Website: (<https://www.alberta.ca/prevent-the-spread.aspx>).

- All participants must remain a minimum of two metres apart during participation.
- Physical distancing programming should be used:
 - Any time a skill development activity involves players and instructors/ team officials from more than one group or team; or
 - Any time a Cohort has not been put in place.
- On-ice markings can help with physical distancing while performing skills or waiting in line.



Hockey Alberta has specified that a maximum of 30 individuals are permitted on the ice at any one time when using physical distancing. The recommendation is only 16-24 players on the ice at one time.

Whenever possible, tryout sessions should be conducted using physical distancing in order to mitigate the risk of transmission.

For suggested practice plans, practice tips and options for structuring play using Physical Distancing, check the [Physical Distance Practice Plans tab](#) on the Hockey Alberta website.

COHORTING

Stage 2 of the Government of Alberta's Relaunch Plan identifies types of Cohorts, including Sport Cohorts, and the guidelines for those. Sports Cohort guidelines include:

- When playing a sport or engaging in a physical activity that involves or requires multiple participants/players and where it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres from other participants/players, the individuals in the group should form a Cohort.
- The maximum number of individuals that can form a Cohort is 50.
 - This includes any coaches/staff, instructors, participants, officials, and volunteers who consistently and routinely engage with participants at a distance of less than 2 metres.
 - Coaches, staff and officials who primarily interact with individuals or teams at a distance of 2 metres or greater do not need to be counted as part of the Cohort.
 - These individuals are required to wear a mask and perform proper hand hygiene if it becomes necessary to temporarily interact with cohorting participants at a distance of less than 2 metres.
- Transportation to and from activities should be arranged so that only Cohort members, or members from the same household, share rides.
- Individuals should limit the number of Cohorts to which they belong.
- If an individual or team member wishes to change Cohorts, they should not participate in new Cohort activity for 14 days (this reflects the incubation period of the virus).
- If a Cohort comes to completion during Stage 2, a new Cohort may be formed if there is a 14-day period between completion of play in the old Cohort and the beginning of the new Cohort.
- It is recommended that each Cohort appoint a responsible person whose role is to ensure cohort rules and other public health guidance are followed.
- Groups of players or teams in different Cohorts cannot play with/ against each other.

Even while using cohorting, it is recommended to try and utilize physical distancing whenever possible (dressing rooms, benches, and in public areas).

For more information on Cohorts: **See *Government of Alberta Website*: [Guidance on Cohorts](#)**

HOCKEY PROGRAMMING

To help structure play throughout all levels of amateur hockey in the province, Hockey Alberta has updated Return to Hockey timelines (included in previous versions of the Return to Hockey Plan) for its various levels of hockey. Where completed, a full Return to Hockey plan can be found in the indicated appendices.

Activities allowed, and date ranges, are included for each of the Development and Modified Competition seasons. Programming must still occur using either Physical Distancing or Cohorting, as outlined in the appendices.

For examples of Cohorting in hockey, **[See Appendix 1 – Cohort Examples](#)**



When using Cohorts in hockey, organizations should note the following:

- Where there are defined/ structured sub-groups that comprise a Cohort in minor hockey, Hockey Alberta requires that each sub-group must have a designated coach/ leader that is part of the 50-person Cohort.
- Anyone included in the Cohort is not required to mask, or maintain physical distancing. All others who may be interacting with the Cohort are required to physical distance, and observe masking and sanitizing protocols.
- When a player is released from a Cohort and is intending to try out for another team, the player must wait 14 days before joining a new Cohort. The player may participate in activities offered via physical distancing during the 14-day period.
- To enhance the experience of all participants, it is recommended that MHAs and/or Teams use evaluation and/or sorting methods to identify like-skilled players to be included in each Cohort.
- During the Development Season:
 - In some cases, only one age division will be needed to establish a viable Cohort. In other cases, organizations may need to combine age divisions to establish a large enough participant group for a Cohort.
 - In cases where smaller MHAs are unable to form a Cohort, obtaining approval from Hockey Alberta to join with neighbouring MHAs is an acceptable alternative.
- If programs wish to include more than 40 players in their Tryout process, they will be permitted to operate 'Tryout' sessions with physical distancing measures in place. These sessions will assist in the identification of the players that will move on to participate in the Cohort.
- Programs that can/ wish to immediately identify a maximum of 40 players can do so and create a Cohort for the Development Season.
- Players may be allowed to access a second tryout outside of their established registration area (AA recruitment area, AAA draw zone, etc.), in accordance with current Hockey Alberta Regulations. Third tryouts will not be permitted.
- Teams should make decisions on releasing players as early as possible to help move those players to the next level and through the system.

[See Appendix 2 – Player Selection Resource Guide](#)

Development and Modified Competition Season Outlines

SENIOR AND JUNIOR

Development Season			Modified Competition Season
Prep Skates, Tryouts & Team Practices	Exhibition Series	Team Training	League Series Play
Currently Operating	Can Start October 5	October 15-29	Can Start October 30
* Dates within this chart are subject to change and may differ slightly by League and level of Hockey. * Leagues will schedule all Exhibition Play amongst Teams within their League. * After selecting their roster, Teams must take a 14-day break from Cohort activity prior to playing exhibition. * Leagues will schedule all game play ensuring Teams have the 14-day break from Cohort activity. * Each League will determine the exact start dates of League Play, no earlier than October 30.			

[See Appendix 3 – Return to Hockey, Senior & Junior Hockey.](#)



MINOR ELITE (MALE AAA, FEMALE AAA, FEMALE AA)

	Development Season			Modified Competition Season
Division	Prep Skates / Tryouts	Exhibition Series	Team Training	League Series Play
U18 Male AAA	Currently Operating	N/A	September 29 – October 13	October 14
U16 Male AAA	Currently Operating	October 16-30	N/A	October 31
U15 Male AAA	Currently Operating	N/A	September 29 – October 13	October 14
U18 Female AAA	Currently Operating	October 16-25	October 1-15	October 30
U18 Female AA	Currently Operating	October 30 – November 8	October 12-30	November 13
U15 Female AA	Currently Operating	October 30 – November 8	October 12-30	November 13

* Dates within this chart are subject to change and may differ slightly by Level of Hockey.
 * For AFHL Teams, the League will schedule all Exhibition Play.
 * For AEHL Teams, only U16 will have Exhibition.
 * U16 Male Exhibition will be scheduled against the same Team you start League play against.
 * Teams must abide by the 14-day break from Cohort activity prior to being eligible to play exhibition games.
 * Leagues will schedule all game play ensuring Teams have the 14-day break from Cohort activity.
 * Each League will determine the exact start dates of League Play, no earlier than dates indicated above.

For more information, go to the league websites, aehl.ca or afhl.ca.

MINOR MALE AA

	Development Season			Modified Competition Season
Division	Prep Skates / Tryouts	Team Training	Exhibition Games	League Series Play
U18	Currently Ongoing or Completed	Can Start October 2	Can Start October 16	Can Start October 27
U16	Currently Ongoing or Completed	Can Start October 4	Can Start October 18	Can Start October 29
U15	Currently Ongoing or Completed	Can Start September 25	Can Start October 9	Can Start October 20
U13	Currently Ongoing or Completed	Can Start September 29	Can Start October 13	Can Start October 24

* Dates within this chart are subject to change and may differ slightly by League and Level of Hockey.
 * League start dates will determine the timeframe in which Exhibition Play may occur (maximum two games).
 * Teams must abide by the 14-day break from Cohort activity prior to being eligible to play exhibition games.
 * Exhibition can only be scheduled against the same Team you are scheduled to start League play against.
 * League Play will be scheduled in series ensuring Teams have the 14-day break from Cohort activity.
 * Each League will determine the exact start dates of League Play, no earlier than the date identified above.



MINOR HOCKEY

Division	Development Season			Modified Competition Season	
	Prep Skates / Physically Distanced Sorting	Exhibition Series	Team Training	Tiering Play	League Series Play
U18	September 7	Oct. 9 – 22	Oct. 23 – Nov. 5	*Nov. 6	Jan. 2021
U15	September 7	Oct. 9 – 22	Oct. 23 – Nov. 5	*Nov. 6	Jan. 2021
U13	September 7	Oct. 9 – 22	Oct. 23 – Nov. 5	*Nov. 6	Jan. 2021
U11	September 7	Oct. 9 – 22	Oct. 23 – Nov. 5	*Nov. 6	Jan. 2021

- * Dates within this chart are subject to change and may differ slightly by League and Level of Hockey.
- * League Play will be scheduled in series ensuring Teams have the 14-day break from Cohort activity.
- * Each League will determine the exact start dates of League Series Play, no earlier than the date identified above.
- * Leagues will determine the start of Tiering Play for each team, starting no earlier than November 6.

[See Appendix 4 – Return to Hockey, Minor Hockey](#)

INTRO TO HOCKEY

Division	Development Season	Modified Competition Season
U9	Sept. 15 – Oct. 31	Nov. 1 – Mar. 31
U7	Sept. 15 – Oct. 31	Nov. 1 – Mar. 31

A full overview of the Development and Modified Competition seasons for Intro to Hockey can be found in Appendix 8 – Return to Hockey, Intro to Hockey. The plan includes protocols for ensuring our youngest players develop skills and transition smoothly to games, as noted in the chart above. [See Appendix 5 – Intro to Hockey Plan](#)

MINOR HOCKEY REGISTRATION PROTOCOLS

Development Season:

Sanctioning:

- Camps (e.g. tryouts, conditioning, etc.)
 - MHAs, Sledge Hockey, Accredited Schools and other Minor-aged programming can schedule and operate sanctioned camps without having to complete any additional application processes.
- Exhibition Game Sanctions and Travel Permits
 - Programs that will have Exhibition games arranged for them by Hockey Alberta and the respective League, do not have to obtain further permits.
 - Sledge Hockey programs and MHAs operating Tiered Minor Hockey and Intro to Hockey must obtain sanctioning through the Centre Ice Portal.
 - Members can operate training activity in accordance with Hockey Canada guidelines and, when doing so, they know they have coverage.
 - Tournament Sanctions will not be approved during the Development Season.
 - Hockey Alberta reserves the right to rescind a sanction for any program that does not adhere to these guidelines.

Eligible Participants:

- Participants from the established registration area.
 - i. Tiered Hockey - MHA boundary
 - ii. Minor Female - Closest Female Program
 - iii. HCAS - No Restrictions
 - iv. AA Hockey - Recruitment Area
 - v. AAA Hockey - Draw Zone



Participant Registration:

- At the discretion of the Member, there are two options for registering players and team officials at this stage:
 1. Register all participants onto rosters in accordance with the normal procedures. (This is only recommended if your organization has completed the player evaluation/ tryout process and/ or knows the players who should be on each Team).
- OR
- 2. Register all participants onto group lists in HCR. Complete this based on the age division to track individuals who have signed-up to play within your organization.
- Requests for team rosters and age division group lists are submitted in accordance with normal procedures.
- Members will follow existing regulations and policies (ie: boundaries) regarding player eligibility and complete the registration process for players eligible for their own programs.
 1. As it would involve players changing cohorts, Affiliation will not be permitted to be filed nor used during the Development Season.

Modified Competition Season:

Sanctioning:

- Exhibition Game Sanctions and Travel Permits
 - Once League Series play has started, Teams will be engaged in 'Competition Cohorts' therefore Exhibition Games will not be permitted.
- Members can operate training activity in accordance with Hockey Canada guidelines and, when doing so, they know they have coverage.
- Out of Province travel may be restricted depending on Federal and Provincial government recommendations and restrictions.
- Timelines for when consideration will be given to requests for tournament sanctions will be confirmed by Hockey Alberta based on Government of Alberta protocols.

Participant Registration:

- The Team Order process and initial Registration dates have been amended based on start-up dates.
 1. All players participating must be registered to a team in the HCR prior to their first game.
 2. Participants will need to be registered onto rosters in accordance with the normal procedures.
 3. As it would involve players changing Cohorts, Affiliation will not be permitted to be filed nor used during the Modified Competition Season.
- Without the use of Affiliate Players, some Teams may encounter the need of a 'Substitute Goaltender'. Requests for access to Substitute Goaltenders will be considered by the League and Hockey Alberta on a case by case basis and will adhere to all cohort, physical distancing and/ or masking precautions.
- Registration deadlines may be amended based on start-up dates.
- All carryover suspensions from the previous season will be applied to players and team officials for this stage and must be served in full prior to participating or be approved for a suspension deferral.

Regular Season Outline

When Government of Alberta guidelines allow, the traditional hockey season model will be eligible to return. Hockey Alberta will work with Members and Leagues to return to play in a safe and productive manner.



3 PROTOCOLS AND SAFETY

Hockey Canada, Hockey Alberta and its 13 Member Branches have built a comprehensive Safety Guidelines document, along with an FAQ document, to provide direction and support as organizations (administrators, coaches, managers, safety staff, trainers), parents and players prepare to return to hockey. The information included in these documents should be reviewed regularly, as it provides a solid framework to follow for any organization (and its members) as Return to Hockey planning is undertaken.

[See Appendix 6 – Hockey Canada Safety Guidelines.](#)

[See Appendix 7 – Hockey Canada Safety Guidelines FAQ.](#)

Hockey Alberta's Members and sanctioned partners are to ensure they do the following:

- follow the Government of Alberta's COVID-19 Public Health guidelines.
- comply with Hockey Alberta's Return to Hockey information.
- comply with all requirements in agreements with arenas/ recreational facilities.
- communicate with their members the safety protocols and Return to Hockey approach that have been approved in Alberta, and for the organization.

For parents and players, their responsibilities include:

- stay at home if experiencing any symptoms.
- become educated on the safety protocols and procedures and adhere to them while at the session.
- ensure each player has his/her own, clearly-labelled water bottle which is sanitized prior to each session, and his/her own hand sanitizer for use while on the ice.
- ensure equipment is dried, cleaned and/or sanitized following each session.
- arrange appropriate transportation to and from the session.
- do not spit, blow nose freely or release any bodily fluid anywhere in any facility due to an extremely high risk of virus transfer.

A detailed outline of responsibilities of Administrators, Coaches and Managers, Safety Person and Trainer, Players and Parents can be found in Appendix 8 – Roles and Responsibilities.

[See Appendix 8 – Roles and Responsibilities.](#)

GAME PREPARATION CONSIDERATIONS

As is outlined in Section 5 – Facilities, the guidelines and requirements for user groups may vary between arena facilities. That places a responsibility on the host team/ association to ensure that information pertaining to masking requirements, dressing rooms, spectators, facility access etc is clarified in advance, and shared with the visiting team(s). A checklist of game consideration items has been prepared for the use of teams/ associations.

[See Appendix 9 – Game Preparation Checklist](#)



IN-GAME PROTOCOLS

COVID-19 enters the body through the eyes, nose or mouth (not through the skin) when an individual touches their face. Participants should:

- refrain (to the extent possible) from touching their eyes, nose, mouth and face during activities.
- limit celebration gestures or customs during activities (e.g., handshakes, high fives, fist bumps, chest bumps) that bring attendees within 2 metres or promote physical contact.

On-ice officials are not to shake hands with the coaches prior to the game. Instead, officials and coaches will use verbal greetings from a distance of at least 2 metres.

Opposing teams are not to shake hands prior to or at the conclusion of a game. They may acknowledge each other through a stick tap, or other means, from a distance of at least 2 metres.

Off-ice officials (for example timekeepers, penalty box staff, etc.) must either wear a mask or maintain a minimum 2-metre distance from others.

MASKS

All programs and activities are expected to follow the guidelines put in place by the Government of Alberta, the municipality and facility with respect to the wearing of masks in public areas. During Hockey Alberta sanctioned activity it is recommended that coaches, team officials, off-ice officials, on-ice officials, instructors, players, volunteers and parents that will be interacting with a Team (for example, assisting with equipment in the dressing room), wear masks when they are not separated by a physical barrier or are unable to keep a two-metre distance from all other participants. Other personal protective equipment may be appropriate depending on the task as well (e.g. First Aid).

For guidance on how to choose and wear a non-medical mask to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, please refer to the [Government of Alberta website page on Masks](#).

For Players participating via Cohorting: masks are not required in the dressing room, on the player's bench or in the penalty box area, or on the ice. These areas are considered within the "field of play" for the sport.

For Players participating via Physical Distancing: they must maintain two-metre physical distancing, and wear masks within the dressing room. Players may only remove their mask immediately prior to placing their helmet on and leaving the dressing room to go to the ice.

OTHER FACILITIES/ PROGRAMS (YOGA, FITNESS/WEIGHT ROOMS)

Please review the [Guidance for Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation – Stage 2](#) document. It includes guidelines for participants in the following areas:

- High Intensity Fitness Classes and Studios
- Low Intensity Fitness Classes (eg Yoga, Pilates)
- Weight Rooms and Fitness Equipment Spaces



RECORD KEEPING, PUBLIC HEALTH CONTACT TRACING AND PRIVACY

- Prior to the start of a program (for example, first ice session, camp, event), the organizer should distribute the [Alberta Health Daily Checklist](#) to all participants. If a participant can answer YES to any of the questions, they are not to attend. Collecting and storing the document is no longer required.
- During each day of a program, an individual should be designated to record the names of all participants in each Cohort to assist AHS should an individual test positive for COVID-19 and contact tracing is necessary.
 - Rosters are to be kept for each event/activity so there is a record of which individuals were present.
- To support accurate contact tracing, organizers should encourage all attendees to download and use the Alberta contact tracing app, **ABTraceTogether**.

PLANNING FOR RAPID RESPONSE TO SICK ATTENDEES

If an attendee becomes sick while participating, the following requirements apply:

- While preparing to immediately leave the facility or event, symptomatic individuals should perform proper hand hygiene, put on a non-medical face mask, and maintain at least 2 metres distance from all others.
- The individual should arrange, with assistance from team officials or the facility as necessary, for immediate transportation to their home/residence to begin isolation. Public transportation like buses, taxis or ride sharing should be avoided.
- Once a sick individual has left the facility or event, facility staff should clean and disinfect all surfaces and areas with which the individual may have come into contact.

Provided this guidance is being followed, there is no need to cancel an activity, or postpone the undertaking of a cohort group, in the event that an individual becomes sick. Team officials should immediately consider and record the names of all participants in which the sick individual has been in contact. This information may be necessary to assist public health officials if the sick individual later tests positive for COVID-19.

REPORTING A POSITIVE COVID CASE

If an attendee tests positive, AHS will only request information about the attendee's participation in sport if it is deemed that a potential exposure is likely to have occurred during such activity.

- When interviewing a person who has tested positive, AHS investigators will determine if there are close contacts that should be made aware/notified based on the period of infectivity and the organization's compliance with public health guidance. This might involve a call to the team representatives or players, but only if necessary.
- An individual participant is under no obligation to inform sport organizations or other participants, coaches, instructors, officials or volunteers of:
 - the reason for missing a practice or game,
 - if they are pursuing COVID-19 testing, or
 - the results of a COVID-19 test.
- Organizations and team officials should be respectful of the privacy and sensitivity of every participant's personal health information, and comply with relevant requirements set out in Alberta's *Health Information Act*.



4 COMMUNICATIONS

It is crucial for Hockey Alberta and our Members to communicate with our respective audiences on the details of the Return to Hockey Plan and the programming planned by each organization. Returning and potential new participants want to know what programming is available from their local MHA or team, and that it is aligned with planning by Hockey Alberta and Hockey Canada. It is also important to ensure that the entire hockey community understands that the safety of all participants is paramount to Hockey Alberta and our Members.

Hockey Alberta is committed to providing regular updates to our Members. Our Return to Hockey Plan and its appendices, Bulletins and Memoranda pertaining to COVID-19, and other related materials will be housed on the [Hockey Alberta website](#) on the Return to Hockey Plan page.

We encourage our Members to engage in regular and open communication with participants/ customers as a key part of returning safely to the rink. Members should have a designated page on their website for information related to your program plans. That page should include a link to the Hockey Alberta Return to Hockey page.

It is recommended that each organization identify a Return to Hockey Lead who is responsible to update and circulate all relevant information to everyone within the organization. The Lead would also be the organizational contact to whom coaches, family members and others within an organization would direct questions. If those questions required input from Hockey Alberta, the Lead would contact Hockey Alberta for the answers and then circulate in a timely and accurate manner to the appropriate audiences within the organization.

Other responsibilities can include:

- Monitoring all relevant updates from the Government of Alberta and Alberta Health.
- Monitoring all relevant updates from Hockey Alberta.
- Communicating with your local facilities on guidelines and updates.
- Ensuring teams are following the prevention guidelines set by the Member/hockey association/league.
- Meeting with their Members on a regular basis to assist in facilitating updates.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section has been developed to address the questions that have been asked by Hockey Alberta Members. The questions and answers can be found in Appendix 10 – FAQ. As additional questions are included, the FAQ document will be updated at the Return to Hockey page on the Hockey Alberta website, <https://www.hockeyalberta.ca/members/return-hockey/>.

[See Appendix 10 – Hockey Alberta Member FAQ – UPDATED](#)



5 FACILITIES AND SPECTATORS

Hockey Alberta Members and arena facilities must work together to ensure everyone complies with public health guidelines, and that facility users are prepared for the processes and procedures in place at the facilities they use. All Hockey Alberta Members are reminded to engage in positive and open communication with their facilities in planning a safe return to the rink.

Facilities will adopt the standards required by the Government of Alberta, and update and adapt to changes as required. Those standards may differ between facilities or municipalities, so the onus is on the Member to reach out as part of the facility rental agreement process for clarification of the following:

- Guidelines and requirements specific to physical distancing in common areas like lobbies and spectator seating?
- What is the spectator capacity? Who is responsible to monitor and enforce?
- Is there a contact tracing method required for spectators? If yes, who is responsible?
- Does the facility have specific Cohort restrictions?
- Restrictions on the number of people allowed in public areas?
- Entry and/or re-entry rules? Will masks be required?
- Areas not accessible in the facility – main lobby, dressing rooms, spectator area, etc?
- Dressing rooms available for team cohort use? If not, what options are available for players, parents, coaches and officials?
- Are showers available for use in player and officials' dressing rooms?
- Is there a time limit that you are permitted in the dressing room before and after your ice time?
- How much time is there between ice rentals (15/30 minutes)?
- Common areas available to put on skates with marked physical-distanced seating?
- Cleaning and disinfection processes implemented by facility operators?
 - How often are common touchpoints cleaned?
 - Are there requirements of user groups to sanitize arena facilities or equipment as part of the rental agreement?

It is recommended that a ***force majeure clause*** be included in any future contracts that you negotiate.

SPECTATORS

Spectators may be allowed in the facility, subject to physical distancing measures (based on current Government of Alberta and local municipal restrictions) and any specific directions provided by facility management. The allowance of spectators is at the discretion of each facility and should they be allowed the following guidelines are in place:

- Spectators should be kept out of participant spaces (ice surface, dressing rooms, benches).
- With 2 metres of distance maintained between members of different households (with the exception of core/ household cohorts), the following capacity restrictions apply:
 - A **maximum of 100 spectators is permitted for indoor events/settings.**
- Cheering and yelling is strongly discouraged as it presents a high risk of spreading droplets.
- It is strongly recommended that spectators wear masks.



6 COACHES AND OTHER TEAM OFFICIALS

CERTIFICATION AND TRAINING

The structure of certification and training clinics and seminars for Coaches and Team Officials has been confirmed by Hockey Canada and Hockey Alberta for the 2020-21 season. Certification programs include a combination of in-person clinics (using physical distancing) and online programming.

Hockey Alberta has the same requirements for all Coaches and Team Officials for the 2020-21 season (November 15 deadline), with the addition of an online Hockey Canada Return to Hockey Safety Guidelines module for all head coaches. The module is now available.

[RETURN TO HOCKEY SAFETY MODULE >](#)

The list of current coaching requirements is available under the Coaches tab on the Hockey Alberta website:

[GO TO COACH EDUCATION >](#)

STRUCTURE OF IN-PERSON CLINICS

- All clinics offered via Physical Distancing. A two-metre distance between attendees and instructors will be in place throughout all clinics.
- All participants will be required to complete a pre-screening document prior to attendance.
- Facility policy regarding masks will be followed.
- All registration must be done online, prior to the clinic. No walk ups will be accepted.

[REGISTER NOW FOR A COACH CLINIC >](#)

For the clinic, ensure you bring the following:

- Mask/ Face Covering
- For the on-ice portion (skates, stick, gloves, CSA-approved helmet)
- For the in-class portion: notepad, pen/pencil, and/or iPad/ laptop

REGISTRATION PROCESSES

The Hockey Alberta regulations require all Teams to have Team Officials registered to them that meet the required certification and training criteria for the specific level of hockey.

- Registration of at least 1 Team Official per team (2 recommended) is required to comply with Hockey Alberta Regulations.
- Where there are defined/ structured sub-groups that comprise a Cohort, Hockey Alberta requires that each sub-group must have a designated coach/ leader that is part of the 50-person Cohort.

When using a Cohort, it is recommended that instructors, coaches and other team officials be a part of a Cohort with only one team and that physical distancing measures be practiced at all times when engaging in activity with any other team(s).

A strategy for accomplishing this is to include a coach in the Cohort of a team that s/he is a registered Head Coach with and ensure the coach (or other Team Official) engages in physical distancing measures and proper use of masks when engaged in activity for any other teams s/he is registered.



COACHING DURING PRACTICES AND GAMES

When participating via Cohorting:

- Team officials are not required to wear masks in the dressing room, on the player's bench or in the penalty box area, or on the ice. These areas are considered within the "field of play" for the sport.
- When Cohorts are being used and some coaches are not part of the Cohort (they are instead physically distancing from all other participants), those coaches are required to wear masks while in the dressing room and while on the player's bench.

When participating via Physical Distancing:

- Team officials must maintain two-metre physical distancing from all other participants, and wear masks within the dressing room.
- Team officials are to wear masks while on the bench but can remove them while coaching/ instructing on the ice.



7 ON-ICE OFFICIALS

CERTIFICATION, TRAINING AND REGISTRATION

The structure of certification and training clinics and seminars for On-Ice Officials has been confirmed by Hockey Canada and Hockey Alberta for the 2020-21 season.

- For new officials, and returning Level I and II officials, certification clinics will start after Thanksgiving weekend. The current targeted start date is the weekend of October 17-18.
- Levels III-VI officials are to sign up for a video conference session to obtain their certification for 2020-21. These clinics are underway.

Check the Hockey Alberta Officials website (officials.hockeyalberta.ca) for updates, clinic registration information, and current information pertaining to officiating and the 2020-21 season.

OFFICIATING ASSIGNMENTS

On-ice officials are not required until the Modified Competition Season. Assignment of officials will employ the following protocols whenever possible:

- Assign officials in small groups to the same set of teams/ leagues to limit exposure to other officials.
- Assign officials to a limited number of leagues to minimize exposure to team cohorts.
- Ensure any official who refuses any game for any reason is not subject to future assigning restrictions.
- Limit travel for officials where practical.

When using Officials for any type of game play there are two options:

- Officials may be assigned by their Regional Coordinator/ assigning team to a 50-participant Cohort and will be required to follow cohorting guidelines, or
- Where it is not possible to assign officials as part of a Cohort, officials will be required to physical distance during games. Officials participating using physical distancing must do the following:
 - Wear a mask when a minimum of 2 metres of physical distance cannot be maintained
 - For example, working on the players' bench side, faceoffs and gatherings after whistles.
 - Consider use of an electronic whistle to facilitate mask wearing
 - Limit touching your face/mask (in accordance with the Government of Alberta Masking Guidance)
 - Sanitize your hands regularly prior to, during and after the game. Officials may wish to bring a small bottle of hand sanitizer or disinfectant hand wipes to use while on the ice.
 - Direct coaches that on-ice officials will significantly limit or eliminate their physical presence around the players between whistles (at stoppages of play) and use their rulebook to ensure the game is played in a safe and fair manner;

Full details and an FAQ can be found in the Hockey Alberta On-Ice Officials Plan.

[See Appendix 11 – Hockey Alberta On-Ice Officials](#)

APPENDICES

(Appendices can be accessed on the Hockey Alberta website:

[RETURN TO HOCKEY PLAN >](#)

