



# SEASON PLAN



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*Appendix A: FAQ – COVID-19 Vaccinations – from Sport Law*



# 1 INTRODUCTION

Hockey Alberta and our Member organizations are committed to a fun and safe environment for all participants as we get the 2021-22 season underway. The **Season Plan** set forth in this document will prepare Member organizations and participants to participate safely this season.

***This plan is current as of September 9, 2021.***

From the onset of the pandemic in March 2020, Hockey Alberta established COVID-related plans for our sport based on the guidance and requirements of the Government of Alberta and Alberta Health Services. For the 2021-22 season, Hockey Alberta's planning continues to be based on current direction from those bodies. That also means we will adapt to any new mandates that may be provided if circumstances change in Alberta.

Currently, the Government of Alberta has Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH) orders in place regarding masking and isolation requirements. To review current CMOH orders and other mandates and guidance by the Government of Alberta:

[CMOH Public Health Orders >](#)

[Government of Alberta – Current Measures >](#)

As the 2021-22 season progresses, Hockey Alberta's plan will be fluid and flexible to respond to mandates that may be provided by the Government of Alberta and/or Provincial Health officials.

Please visit [Hockey Alberta's website](#) regularly for important information and updates.

## 2 GENERAL PROTOCOLS

Full practices (including all types of drills and scrimmages) are permitted, as well as exhibition and/ or League games. While hockey activities are permitted, Hockey Alberta provides the following reminders:

### 1. Masking

Effective Saturday, September 4, masks are required to be worn in all public spaces and workplaces in the province. Hockey Alberta is interpreting the mandate as follows:

- a. Face masks are not required by any player on the ice or on the players' bench.
- b. Face masks are not required by coaches or on-ice officials on the ice surface during sport/ physical activity.
- c. Face masks are required by coaches and team staff while on the bench, and by all penalty/ timekeeping staff.
- d. Face masks are required by everyone while in a dressing room.

**Please note:** Municipalities and individual facilities may have different interpretations of the new mandate. It is the responsibility of the Member organization or participating team to consult with the municipality or facility and be aware of any municipal and/ or facility-specific health and safety mandates that may differ from Hockey Alberta's interpretation.



## 2. Vaccinations

There is no requirement for an individual to be vaccinated to participate in amateur hockey with a Hockey Alberta Member organization.

- a. Provincial Health officials continue to recommend everyone who is eligible to get vaccinated.
- b. Member organizations considering adopting their own COVID-19 vaccination-related policies should refer to the enclosed guidance from Sport Law. **See Appendix A.**
- c. Where teams/ organizations are considering out-of-province travel, they must familiarize themselves with any requirements of the province/ state to which they are travelling, and adhere to any mandates regarding vaccinations in that region.

## 3. Individual

All participants and other individuals involved in, or attending, a hockey activity are to show respect and caution for themselves and others. This includes:

- a. Prior to attending any hockey-related activity, any individual who has a suspected case of COVID-19 or is feeling ill and showing COVID-19-like symptoms (such as a cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose, or sore throat) should stay home.
- b. While participating in a hockey-related activity, any participant who exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 (such as a cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose, or sore throat) is to notify his/her head coach (or appropriate team contact person) immediately, discontinue participation, and return home. The participant then must adhere to the protocol provided by the Government of Alberta:
  - I. Consult the Government of Alberta guidelines (<https://www.alberta.ca/isolation.aspx>) to determine if there is a need to isolate and/ or to determine if a COVID-19 test is required.
  - II. Follow all Alberta Health guidance pertaining to return to participation once symptom-free or until negative test results have been received.

## 4. Facility

Individual local governments or facilities may implement local mandates with regard to masking and other COVID-19 safety measures.

It is the responsibility of the Member organization or participating team to be aware of any local government and/ or facility-specific health and safety mandates. Where local mandates are in place:

- a. All Hockey Alberta Member organizations and participants are to adhere to those mandates in all hockey-related activities.
- b. When an organization is hosting a hockey-related event, the home team must ensure all participants (including visiting teams, off-ice officials, on-ice officials, or any individual players) are informed of these requirements as soon as possible prior to the event.
- c. A Hockey Alberta Member organization or participant not adhering to local mandates may be subject to disciplinary action.



## 5. General

Last season, the hockey community implemented general health and safety best practices. Wherever possible, players, coaches, staff, on- and off-ice officials, and spectators are to continue these practices:

- a. Physically distance wherever and whenever possible.
  - I. Players should avoid post-whistle scrums.
  - II. On-ice officials should limit their presence around players between whistles.
- b. Avoid handshakes, fist bumps, hugs, or any physical contact whenever possible.
- c. Wash hands frequently with soap and water.
- d. Wash equipment and clothing regularly (after each event if possible) and do not share towels, jerseys, pant shells, socks, bandanas/skull caps, compression gear, etc.
- e. Have your own water bottle, clearly labelled. Fill the bottle at home, and clean thoroughly before and after each event.
- f. Wash and sanitize after each use any equipment that must be shared, such as goalie gear.
- g. Arrive partially dressed in equipment to help reduce time in the dressing room.
- h. Limit the time spent in a facility by not arriving too far in advance of the start time and leaving quickly after completion.
- i. In the dressing room:
  - I. Utilize physical distancing, use two rooms, where possible.
  - II. Restrict access to team personnel and players as much as possible. If a parent is required to access the dressing room (for example, to assist younger players putting on equipment and/ or for medical situations) only one parent per player should be permitted.
- j. Hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes should be available for all participants.
- k. Do not share food or beverages.
- l. During a practice, coaches should minimize times where athletes are required to be in close proximity by using station-based practice plans.
- m. Off-ice training should take place in areas where physical distancing can occur (for example, gym space or outdoors).
- n. Medical Treatment/Therapy
  - I. Hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes should be made available as players enter/ leave.
  - II. Medical rooms/tables should be disinfected between treatments.
  - III. Protective face masks and gloves should be worn and therapists should wash hands and change gloves between treatments.

## 6. Travel

- a. Teams that choose to travel by bus are required to adhere to Government of Alberta requirements, as well as the requirements of the specific bus company and/ or driver.
- b. Teams intending to travel outside the province, or teams intending to travel to Alberta from other jurisdictions, must adhere to [any travel mandates](#) implemented by the Government of Alberta or other appropriate local, provincial/ state or national government.
- c. Teams based outside of Alberta may participate in a Hockey Alberta league, providing the team's Provincial Government and the Government of Alberta allow interprovincial travel/ participation.

## 7. Youth (11 years and under)

Children aged 11 and under are at the lowest risk of severe outcomes from COVID-19 infection and are less likely than adults to transmit infection to others, however they are also not eligible for COVID-19 vaccine at this time. The Government of Alberta has created a [guidance document for activities with children 11 years and under](#), which includes a section for Physical and Performance Activities. Member organizations should review this document and may adopt some or any of these considerations, at their own discretion.



## 3 RULES AND REGULATIONS

### a. On-ice Officials

- I. All Hockey Alberta sanctioned games (including exhibition) must use registered officials.
- II. After December 15, only registered officials for the current season may be used.

### b. Coaches

- a. Coaches need to have all certification requirements completed by November 15.
- b. The updated Hockey University: **“Planning a Safe Return to Hockey”** course is now available through HCR. It is approximately 20 minutes long and free of charge to complete.

### c. Overage Players

- I. Overage Player policies for each specific level of hockey remain in effect and unchanged for the 2021-22 season.
- II. Changing Overage Policies to accommodate more players and/ or accepting players one additional year older than the policies currently allow would be a risk to player safety.

### d. Suspensions

Because formal game play was never really established in the 2020-21 season, outstanding suspensions coming into the 2021-22 season will be dealt with in the following manner:

- 1) Suspensions carried over from the 2019-20 season:
  - I. All suspensions resulting from a Match Penalty on Official, Match Penalty and/or a Gross Misconduct infraction (for players and team officials) will be carried over to be served in the 2021-22 season.
  - II. All accumulation suspensions resulting from multiple Game Misconducts or Gross Misconducts assessed in violation of 9.2 Harassment of Officials / Unsportsmanlike Conduct will be carried over to be served in the 2021-22 season.
  - III. All other suspensions that resulted from an on-ice infraction (violation of the Playing Rules) will be deemed to be completely served as of April 30, 2021.
- 2) Suspensions assessed in 2020-21
  - I. All suspensions resulting from a Match Penalty on Official, Match Penalty and/or a Gross Misconduct infraction (for players and team officials) will be carried over to be served in the 2021-22 season.
  - II. All other suspensions that resulted from an on-ice infraction (violation of the Playing Rules) have been deemed to be completely served as of April 30, 2021.

## 4 CHAMPIONSHIPS AND TOURNAMENTS

A plan for League, Regional and/ or Provincial Championships is being established. Hockey Alberta is working with representatives at all levels of hockey to ensure our Championships return for the players and Teams at the end of this season.

Sanction requests for individual tournaments are being accepted, and tournaments may be held anywhere in Alberta, unless not allowed by local government mandate. Tournament listings can be found on the [Hockey Alberta website](#).



## 5 INSURANCE

### Hockey Canada

Under Hockey Canada's current General Liability policy, there is a specific definition for the term 'bodily injury' and that definition includes **sickness and disease**. Many insurance companies are implementing Communicable Disease/COVID-19 exclusions on policies, but Hockey Canada has successfully negotiated to leave that exclusion off until September 1, 2023 at the earliest. As a result, individual waivers pertaining to COVID-19 by Hockey Alberta Member Organizations are not required.

### Facility Contracts

It is important to review new facility contracts for the 2021-22 season. They may contain a new clause which absolves the municipality/ private facility owners of any liability related to COVID-19. Given that Hockey Alberta's Member organizations will have little control over cleaning/ sanitizing of rented premises, they should not be expected to take on all liability related to COVID-19 in these facilities.

Also, it is important to ensure that the facility contract includes a *force majeure* clause.

## 6 APPENDICES

**Appendix A: FAQ – COVID-19 Vaccinations – from Sport Law**

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Appendices and the 2021-22 Season Plan  
can be accessed at any time  
on the Hockey Alberta website:

**[SEASON PLAN >](#)**

**QUESTIONS?**

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