



## INITIATION PROGRAM STANDARDS

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Effective starting in the 2017-2018 season, Hockey Canada announced a new policy requiring that all Initiation-aged hockey players (ages 5-6 years) receive age-appropriate programming that is suitable to the age, size and skill level of the participants.

Hockey Alberta has established the following standards to ensure that age-appropriate programming is in place across the entire province. Ice sessions for Initiation-aged players should have an emphasis on skill development and be focused on creating a positive hockey experience as the players are introduced to the game.

Each Minor Hockey Association is required to operate their Initiation program under the standards outlined below. Hockey Alberta will not sanction events that do not comply with the Initiation Program standards and will monitor programming offered by Minor Hockey Associations for compliance.

Hockey Alberta **REQUIRES** that MHAs in Alberta adhere to the following standards:

- **Practice Ice Surface:** All ice sessions must be on a maximum 100' x 85' ice surface or can be a larger surface if station work is utilized
- **Competition Ice Surface:** All ice sessions must be cross-ice, half-ice or third-ice with up to a maximum ice surface size of 100' x 85'

In addition to these required standards, the following are **RECOMMENDED** to be incorporated into the Initiation program:

- **Surface Dividers:** Divide the ice with small boards or other rink dividers
- **Puck:** Blue 4-ounce puck used for all ice sessions
- **Nets:** 3' x 4.5' nets used for all ice sessions
- **Modified Game Rules:** No offside or icing will be called
- **Faceoffs:** Can be used to start play, but not to be used after a goal is scored
- **Seasonal Plan Guidelines:**
  - o 2:1 practice to game ratio;
  - o 2 ice sessions per week (could be more if attending a jamboree or festival);
  - o 2-3 jamborees/festivals per season (maximum);
  - o As Initiation is an introduction to hockey, times for ice sessions should be considered that enable families to participate (ie - weekday sessions no earlier than 5:00 pm, and weekend sessions no earlier than 9:00 am).

A summary of the Initiation hockey standards, as well as best practices and guidelines for Local Minor Hockey Associations, are available on the [Hockey Alberta website](#) and are included in the curriculum of the Coach 1 clinic.



Minor Hockey Associations that do not adhere to the age-appropriate Initiation-level program standards will be subject to disciplinary action as outlined herein. Hockey Alberta will complete an investigation/evaluation of any program that has allegedly violated the standards and, if it is determined that the MHA was non-compliant, the following sanctions will be assessed:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Violation: Written Warning  
A first violation of the standards will result in a written warning being issued to the MHA, informing them of the violation. Additionally, the MHA will be required to participate in a mandatory meeting (either by conference call or in-person) with Hockey Alberta. The meeting will focus on assisting the MHA in the development of their age-appropriate development plan.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Violation: Fine & Elimination of Team Sanctions/Permits  
A second violation of the standards will result in a \$500.00 fine being assessed to the MHA and the respective Team(s) having all travel and tournament sanctions/permits withdrawn until further notice (the fine must be paid within ten (10) business days). Additionally, the MHA will be required to participate in a mandatory meeting (either by conference call or in-person) with Hockey Alberta. The meeting will focus on assisting the MHA in the development of their age-appropriate development plan.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Violation: Elimination of MHA Sanctions/Permits  
A third violation of the standards will result in the removal of all travel and tournament sanctions/permits for the entire MHA until further notice. Additionally, the MHA will be required to participate in a mandatory meeting (either by conference call or in-person) with Hockey Alberta. The meeting will focus on assisting the MHA in the development of their age-appropriate development plan.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Violation: Member Not-In-Good Standing  
A fourth violation of the standards will result in the MHA being identified as a Member Not-In-Good Standing, removing all membership rights and sanctions until further notice.

It is important for all MHAs to understand that Hockey Alberta's goal is not to impact the ability of participants to play hockey and, at all stages of this process, Hockey Alberta is committed to working with the MHA in the creation of an age-appropriate development plan.

However, if an MHA does not implement age-appropriate programming for Initiation-level hockey, the process outlined above will be enforced.