

A banner for Field Hockey Alberta featuring a collage of field hockey action. The background is a green artificial turf field. In the upper left, a player in a white jersey and green shorts is running with the stick. In the upper right, a player in a red jersey with the number 29 is visible. In the center, a player in a white jersey is in a dynamic pose, possibly shooting or passing. A goal with a black net is prominent in the lower left. The entire image is overlaid with semi-transparent blue geometric shapes, including a large triangle on the right and a smaller one on the left. The text 'Field Hockey Alberta' is centered in a light blue font, and 'Safe return to sport 2020' is below it in white. An owl logo is in the bottom right corner.

Field Hockey Alberta

Safe return to sport 2020





Content Disclaimer

Field Hockey Alberta has collected information from our governing body (Field Hockey Canada), the Provincial and Federal Government to create this document to assist athletes, coaches, members and clubs with guidance for different stages regarding the return to sport from the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the pandemic is continually changing so will information, rules and regulations, making it imperative that you continue to check and follow federal, provincial and local health organization guidance and government mandates.

The information, protocols and drills contained in this document are recommendations only and should not be construed as legal advice on any subject matter.





Introduction

On March 13, 2020 Field Hockey Alberta suspended all field hockey practices, games, travel and try it free events. Since the suspension we have been monitoring Covid-19 protocols developed by the Provincial and Federal Government. For the period of time that we were unable to participate in any physical activity we provided virtual lessons, activities and drills through our website and social media accounts. Our virtual resources remain available on our website at the following link:

<http://fieldhockey.ab.ca/content/virtual-practices>

Additional tactics, skills and drills can be found under our resource tab.

As we begin to move towards the reopening of sport we have collaborated with other sports to create a three phase approach to a safe return to sport:

- Phase 1 - Return to modified cohort leagues/programs
- Phase 2- Return to full league play
- Phase 3 - Return to travel tournaments

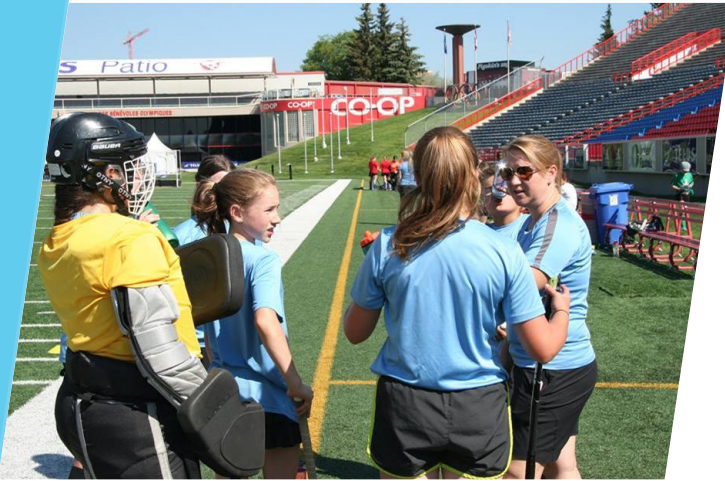
This document focuses on Phase 1 - Other Phases will be released as restrictions become lifted.

Clubs, Leagues and Member Responsibilities

Field Hockey clubs, leagues and teams will need to determine which stage of return best suits their membership and mandate. Local regional restrictions and protocols must also be considered. It is highly recommended that a risk analysis is performed by the retuning league, club or team.

We understand that there is an eagerness to return to play, but ask that individual entities do not create protocols that differ from Field Hockey Alberta, or the Government of Alberta. Failure to comply with the protocols and guidelines may result in fines or loss of insurance coverage.

If government protocols change and field hockey becomes suspended all clubs, leagues, teams and members must comply with these changes immediately. Updates will be provide via email, webpage and social media outlets.



Mini-leagues/Bubbles/Cohorts

All aspects of organized sport, physical activity and recreation may proceed (programming, training, practice and competition) if physical distancing is possible.

If those not participating in physical activity are unable to maintain safe physical distancing, masks should be worn. In sports and activities that generally involve interaction between participants at a distance of less than two-metres, it is recommended that:

- ▶ The activity occur **outdoors**, or Modification of the activity or sport occur to keep participants at a safe distance
- ▶ Where sports and activities cannot be moved outdoors or modified to maintain distance, it is essential to limit the number of contacts between different participants. This is done by playing within set cohorts¹ (e.g., mini-leagues or bubbles with a fixed number of participants).
- ▶ Mini-leagues and bubbles cannot exceed 50 people. This number includes those participants, officials, coaches and trainers who cannot maintain two metres of distance from others at all times. This number does not include parents and spectators.
- ▶ Cohorts, mini-leagues and bubbles should remain together during Stage 2 of Relaunch and only play within the same geographical region (e.g., within a county, town or quadrant of a city).
- ▶ It is recommended that mini-leagues and bubbles be supervised by a responsible person whose role is oversight over maintenance of the group and other public health guidance
- ▶ Coaches may participate in multiple cohorts as long as they are always able to maintain a distance of 2 meters from participants.
- ▶ **Athletes may only participate in ONE sport cohort of 50.**

Phase I - Required staff



- ▶ **Covid-19 Officer:**
A person over the age of 18 must be available at all sessions to ensure protocols are being followed. The officer will aid in athletes entering and exiting the field of play. They will ensure that athletes are following the proper distancing during practices. They will sanitize equipment. The Covid-19 Officer may be a parent volunteer.



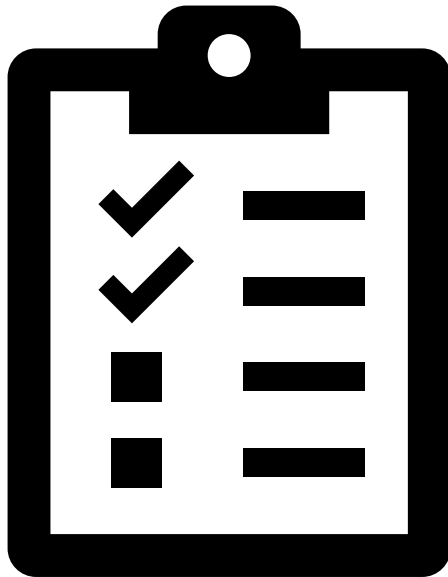
- ▶ **Coach:**
A person over the age of 18 must be available during the session to run the athletes through drills.



- ▶ **Staff must wear masks and have hand sanitizer to use throughout the session. For first aid response, responders should wear PPE, and if possible, the injured participant should also wear a mask.**



Please note that each participant should be screened using [Alberta Health's Daily Checklist](#) (document on the left) prior to the start of each activity. Participants' involvement should be tracked, and information kept for a minimum of 2 weeks, in case of transmission and the need for tracing by AHS.



Overview

This tool has been developed to support activity organizers and facility operators in reducing the risk of transmission of COVID-19 among attendees. The tool is meant to be used to assist with assessing attendees who may be symptomatic, or who may have been exposed to someone who is ill or has confirmed COVID-19.

Attendees should fill out this checklist prior to participating in the activity or program. If an individual answers **YES** to any of the questions, they **must not** be allowed to attend or participate in the activity or program. Children and youth will need a parent to assist them to complete this screening tool.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve, this screening tool will be updated as required.

Initial Screening Questions

1.	Do you/your child have any new onset (or worsening) of any of the following symptoms:	CIRCLE ONE	
	• Fever	YES	NO
	• Cough	YES	NO
	• Shortness of Breath / Difficulty Breathing	YES	NO
	• Sore throat	YES	NO
	• Chills	YES	NO
	• Painful swallowing	YES	NO
	• Runny Nose / Nasal Congestion	YES	NO
	• Feeling unwell / Fatigued	YES	NO
	• Nausea / Vomiting / Diarrhea	YES	NO
	• Unexplained loss of appetite	YES	NO
	• Loss of sense of taste or smell	YES	NO
	• Muscle/ Joint aches	YES	NO
	• Headache	YES	NO
	• Conjunctivitis (commonly known as pink eye)	YES	NO
2.	Has the person attending the activity/facility travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days?	YES	NO
3.	Have you/your child had close <u>unprotected*</u> contact (face-to-face contact within 2 meters/6 feet) with someone who has travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days and who is ill**?	YES	NO
4.	Have you/your child attending the program or activity had close <u>unprotected*</u> contact (face-to-face contact within 2 meters/6 feet) in the last 14 days with someone who is ill**?	YES	NO
5.	Have you/your child or anyone in your household been in close <u>unprotected*</u> contact in the last 14 days with someone who is being investigated or confirmed to be a case of COVID-19?	YES	NO

* "unprotected" means close contact without appropriate personal protective equipment

** "ill" means someone with COVID-19 symptoms on the list above.

Athlete responsibility prior to practice



If you have any minor health symptoms do not attend sessions



If you are considered to be in a risk group do not attend sessions during this phase



Wash hands before attending practice



Go to the washroom before attending practice



Spectators must wear masks



Phase I - Organizational Protocols

All athletes must be registered Field Hockey Alberta members.
Membership must be purchased online prior to the session.
Participants should not carpool unless they are in the same cohort.

All Participants (or parents/guardians if under 18 years of age) must sign the Facility Use and Remote Training Waiver and the Attestation Agreement prior to participating in any sanctioned field hockey activity. (See appendices)

Athletes must come to the field prepared with their own equipment and water bottle.

Parents will drop off athletes no earlier than 10 minutes before the start of the session. The Covid-19 Officer will direct athletes to the proper entrance of the field.

Athletes must maintain a distance of 2 meters apart while waiting for the game/practice to commence.

Phase I - Cohort/League Protocols



Athletes **MUST** maintain physical distancing of at least 2 meters from others when not engaged in game play, unless they are from the same household or cohort family.



Training/league cohorts may have a maximum of 50 athlete participants.



Participants should arrive with their own hand sanitizer to sanitize before and after the session.



No sharing of water bottles, sunscreen, bug spray or other items.



Athletes may not touch or handle equipment



Snacks are discouraged and may not be shared.

Spectators

Field Hockey Alberta does not recommend spectators at any events during this time. If spectators are required, please adhere to the following Government of Alberta Guidelines

- ▶ Spectators (excluding parents and guardians where necessary for player support) should be kept out of participant spaces (e.g., fields of play, courts, ice surfaces).
- ▶ Physical distancing of minimum 2 metres should be maintained by spectators at all times, unless from the same household or cohort.
- ▶ In Stage 2, with 2 metres of distance maintained between members of different households (with the exception of cohort families), the following capacity restrictions apply: A maximum of 200 spectators are permitted for outdoor seated/audience events/settings. A maximum of 100 spectators are 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.

Rapid Response Plan

If a participant or attendee starts feeling symptoms during a game, practice or session:

- The participant/attendee must immediately be isolated from others

Immediately isolating the attendee from others.



- All surfaces that have come in contact with the participant/attendee must be cleaned and disinfected immediately.
- The participant/attendee must isolate as soon as possible.
- If there is a positive test in the cohort, the cohort organizer must communicate that someone in the cohort tested positive (not using names) and strongly recommend that others get tested as well.

Coaching Requirements

Effective immediately Field Hockey Canada requires all new programming and leagues must ensure their coaches have completed the CAC minimum standards for Safe Sport Compliance. This will be a mandatory requirement for all Head Coaches, Assistant Coaches, Managers and Administrators working directly with athletes.

- ▶ Coaches will also be required to have an NCCP number.
- ▶ Safe sport training is a FREE online training program! Safe sport training and NCCP number may be accessed through the link below:
<https://safesport.coach.ca/participants-training>
- ▶ As of April 1, 2020, all Sport Canada-funded organizations are mandated to have training in safe sport available to everyone under their immediate authority.

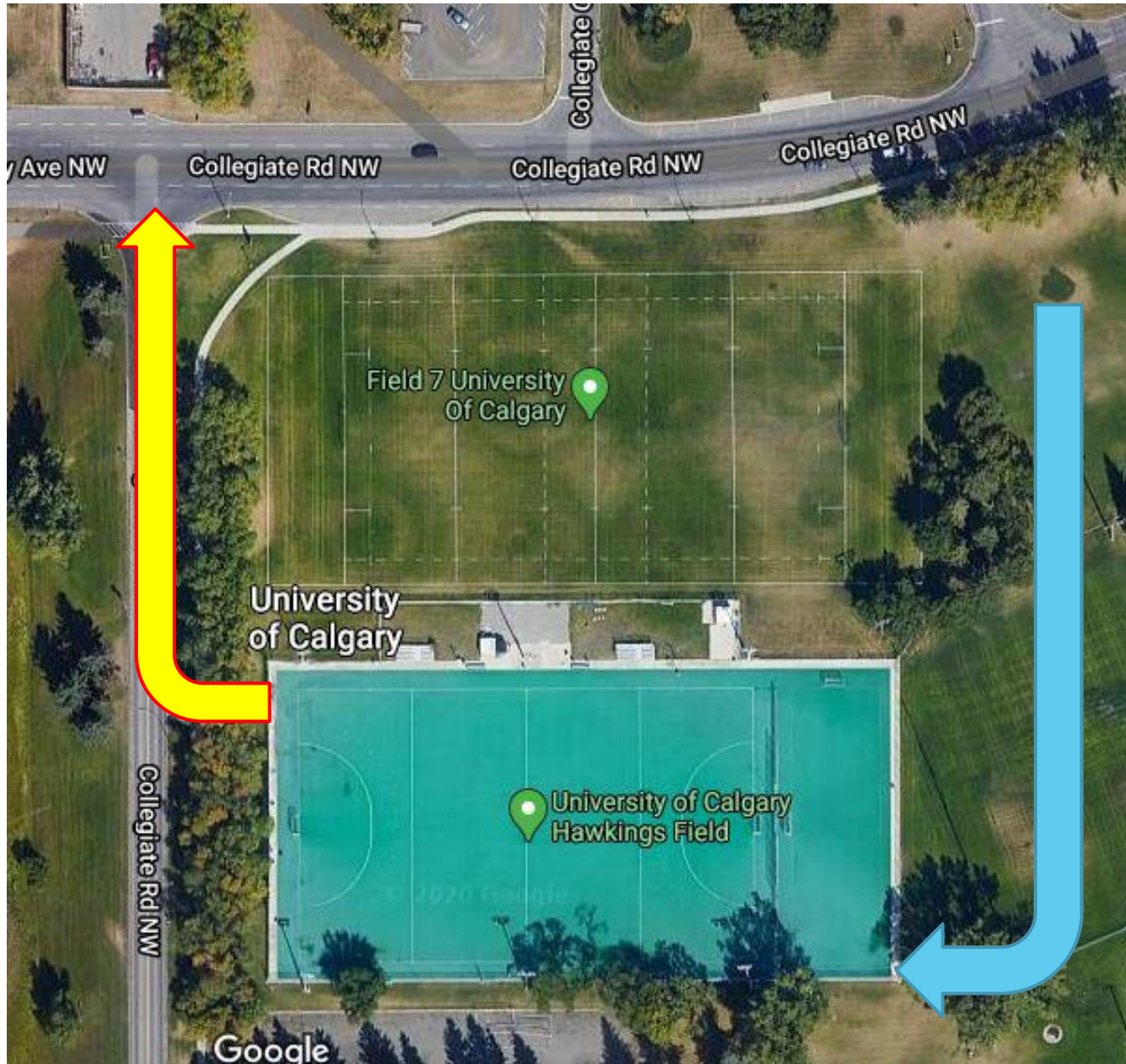
What are the benefits?

With Safe Sport Training from the Coaching Association of Canada, you get:

- ▶ A complete 90-minute program of safe sport training at no cost
- ▶ eLearning that works with all computer operating systems, mobile phones, tablets and other devices
- ▶ Training in your choice of English or French
- ▶ Online training that's compliant with accessibility standards
- ▶ Professional development points for certified coaches



Field Map- Entering & Exit Plan



- Participants enter the field through the East gate (blue arrow).
- Once they reach the gate, they must line up and maintain a distance of 2 meters apart until the other group has exited the field.
- The Covid Officer will direct participants on when they can enter and where to put their equipment.
- Cones will be set up at a socially distanced length for each participant to leave their bag and water.
- Participants will exit the field through the west gate maintaining a minimum of 2 meters apart while exiting.
- Participants must leave the field area immediately. There will be no loitering

Field Hockey Canada

Rule Changes and Guidance for return to play



Community hockey is being reintroduced in a cautious and methodical manner, based on the best available evidence to optimize participant and community safety. In order to be aligned to the FIH's overarching "return to play" considerations; FHC is recommending that the following rule change is put into effect immediately:

Spitting & Nose Blowing

Spitting and nose blowing without a handkerchief or tissue (known as bushman nose blowing), is a practice that unfortunately occurs in our sport and must stop as it poses a significant risk to other participants.

New Rule:

- A 2 min suspension (green card) to be issued to any player or participant caught spitting or bushman nose blowing.
- Repeat offenders (i.e. player(s) offending more than once) to be shown a yellow card (10 mins).
- Consistent repeat offenders will be subject to a disciplinary process under the Local Sport Organization's Code of Conduct Policies. In the event of continued offences to disregard rules and safety of others, the behaviour should be elevated to the Provincial Sport Organization. In the extremely rare cases, matters will be escalated to Field Hockey Canada to review.
- Standard suspension rules to apply.

Umpiring Guidance/tips:

Apply this rule consistently to all participants (i.e. no exceptions). The rule applies to all players and team staff on the field, in the bench area and on the sidelines. Safety is always a key consideration. Ensure players and team management are aware of new rule changes before starting a match. Proactive and preventative education of health and safety requirements is a key action/step.

Other Important considerations/protocol

Application of Rules

When umpiring hockey, our 2 key pillars are to keep the game fair and safe. As well as the understanding the technical application of a rule, it is just as important for umpires to understand the intent/spirit of the rule to ensure the best practical implementation. Apply common sense, consider the context, and ensure consistent application of the rules at all times.

Under the current Covid-19 environment, wherever practical the safety aspect now needs to be extended to include new procedures to reduce contact by players and participants to an absolute minimum. All participants have a personal responsibility to identify and adhere to the best health and safety protocol's pre-, during, and post-match. Accordingly, the following measures are mandatory until further notice:

Protective equipment & use of face masks at Penalty Corners

It is recommended that all protective equipment, including face masks, gloves, (and any other defensive PC equipment to be used) **should not** be shared. Accordingly, it is recommended that defenders at penalty corners have their own clearly identified equipment (e.g. coloured marking).

Umpiring Guidance/tips:

Defensive players are now going to need sufficient time to identify and put on their own protective equipment. Additionally, if it not possible to allocate personal protective equipment to each player, teams may be required to clean their face masks at each penalty corners. Umpires need to allow players an acceptable time to do this. Umpires must still proactively manage the PC set up process.

Goalkeeping Gear

No rule changes, however, it is recommended that all goalkeeping gear not be shared among players and be cleaned and sanitized at home/away from the turf venue prior to every match.

Players Equipment

No rule changes, however, it is recommended that individual players gear (sticks, shin pads, gloves) is not shared with other players. Mouth guards obviously cannot be shared, and players are strongly recommended to keep mouth guards in their mouth during the entirety of the match. Removal of mouth guards on the turf needs to be reduced to an absolute bare minimum. Mouth guards should be cleaned at home/away from the turf venue prior to every match.

Cleaning of Players Equipment

Individual players are strongly recommended to clean all their equipment (water bottles, mouth guards, face masks, gloves, etc.) at home/away from their respective hockey venue wherever practical (both prior to and after each match).

High 5's/Handshakes

We understand that some members of our community will be looking for alternative ways to thank an opponent following a match. Please see the “hockey handshake” as an alternative option.

<https://twitter.com/Xenioshockey/status/1235819830562832384>

Injuries & Blood Protocols

No rule changes, however, to minimize contact the following protocols are recommended:

- Where practical any injured players should be treated by their own team members/management or medical professional
- Team Managers (or equivalent) should prepare and preplan what actions they need to undertake for injury situations

We also recommend that umpires and team management review and understand rules that apply to injuries and blood protocols, and also to check in with your Associations and turf venue to ensure that local procedures are in place and to have an awareness of what these protocols and guidelines are.

Match Balls

To minimize the number of touches/contacts to hockey balls, we recommend:

- Match ball to be cleaned prior to and at the end of every match
- Players are recommended to use sticks rather than handling hockey balls wherever practical

Coin Toss

Where a coin toss is required (e.g. starting a game, starting shootouts etc.), then the coin should be tossed by one umpire with a team captain/representative to call accordingly.

Match Sheet (Game Sheet)

The use, format, and completion of match sheets will differ within Associations and Local Organizations. If using a game sheet, consider arrangements that will limit touches/contacts by individuals such as:

- Providing pre-printed list of team names and numbers with starters clearly indicated
- Umpires fill out cards only from details provided by team managers
- Use of TMS/Altius to record match results where practical

Monitoring and Enforcement

It is assumed that monitoring and enforcement will not just be the responsibility of the officials and will be supported by local and provincial health authorities, Provincial Support Organizations, local associations, club personal, athletes and parents, and coaches and team staff.

General

The above one rule change and recommended measures have been put in place under the current environment of COVID 19. This has been a rapidly changing landscape and a further review or update may occur

Wishing the best of success to all our hockey communities, enjoy the return to play, and keep safe everyone.

While we are all excited to return to sport please remember to:



BE SMART



BE SAFE



BE PATIENT



**BE PREPARED & STAY
INFORMED**