



# RINGETTE ONTARIO

## RETURN TO RINGETTE GUIDELINES

August 10, 2020

## Disclaimer

The return to ringette guidelines included in this document are intended to be used for the purposes outlined in this document. Ringette Ontario strives to provide relevant and timely information; however, information known about COVID-19, “coronavirus”, and recommended health and safety measures can rapidly change, and no guarantee can be given at this time to the accuracy of the document.

This is not a legal document and the Return to Ringette plan is to be used as a guide only. This document is not meant to provide legal advice. Do not rely on this document or treat it as legal advice.

This is not a substitute for actual legislation or orders of the PHO. In the event of ambiguity or conflict between the Return to Ringette Guidelines and the Public Health Act, regulations and orders within the Act will prevail.

Ringette Ontario and our member organizations will comply with requirements of the provincial and local governments and health officials.

The links provided in this document from third party websites have been provided for convenience only. The information found in the links may be updated from time to time. Ringette Ontario does not monitor these sites and is not responsible for updates.



## Introduction

Ringette Ontario's Return to Ringette Guidelines are founded on the overriding principle of encouraging and providing a safe environment for all participants and team members and volunteers. The Return to Ringette Guidelines seek to allow the maximum amount of participation possible for all members of the organization while adhering to Provincial Health regulations.

Ringette Ontario has focused the decisions in this document on our values: Community, Collaboration, Character, Challenge and Competition. We must work as a team in order for us to get safely back on the ice.

This document is understood to be organic and will evolve as needed based on what is occurring in the Province. We will continue to build on these plans and provide further details and resources as we move forward and gain a better understanding on what expectations on sports will be.

The Return to Ringette Guidelines are to be used in conjunction with the following documents:

- Provincial Health Guidelines for the Province of Ontario
- Municipal and Facility Regulations for your Associations' Facilities
- Ringette Canada's Pan-Canadian Return to Ringette Guidelines

Local Ringette Associations in Ontario will need to read and understand these Return to Ringette Guidelines and make additions to the guidelines if required by the Regional Health Authority that governs the area that the Local Association resides within.

The information within these guidelines do not supersede or override protocols, guidelines or restrictions set out by the Regional, Provincial and/or Federal Health Authorities. Ringette Ontario is providing our participants with guidelines to work within government issued protocols in order to assist with returning to ringette related activities.

Ringette Ontario understands that facilities will return and re-open at different rates and that is something that each Local Ringette Association will have to work with when they implement the guidelines for their Associations. The facilities could require additional resources in order to allow users to return to Ringette.

The Return to Play process for all sports is fluid and it is likely that these guidelines may change as directions from Health Authorities may change as the ringette season progresses. As a result, it is understood that the phases we have laid out for returning to ringette may shift in order to align with public health authorities and the current situation in each municipality.

Adherence to the guidelines is necessary for the safety of both ourselves and others within our communities. It is important to note that any individuals who demonstrate that they are unable to adhere to the guidelines will be subject to sanctioning from their Local Ringette Association and Ringette Ontario.



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If there is any conflict between language in the written Return to Ringette Guidelines and the online version the online version will prevail.

### **COVID – 19 Transmission & Symptoms**

COVID-19 is transmitted via liquid droplets. When a person coughs or sneezes, these droplets are transmitted through the air. When individuals are speaking the droplets can also be passed if the individuals are in close proximity to one another.

Close contact between people is the primary way for the virus to spread. As a result, experts have determined that we must minimize contact and maintain physical distancing to limit the transmission of the virus. Physical distancing along with frequent hand washing and avoiding touching faces, nose, and eyes can help decrease the chances of transmission. When sneezing and coughing it is important to practice proper hygiene by coughing and sneezing into the elbow in order to minimize the spread of the droplets. Enhanced cleaning and disinfection of surfaces along with adherence to personal hygiene protocols will assist in limiting the transmission of COVID-19 through surfaces.

COVID-19 has symptoms that are very similar to the common cold and flu and the majority of respiratory illnesses. Symptoms of COVID-19 may include fever, chills, cough, and shortness of breath, sneezing, sore throat, headache, painful swallowing, stuffy or runny nose, loss of sense of smell, fatigue and loss of appetite.

However, it's important to know that some people infected with COVID-19 may present as asymptomatic meaning they do not experience any symptoms at all. Individuals who have compromised immune systems or individuals with chronic health conditions are found to be more susceptible to COVID-19.

Symptoms of COVID-19 are very broad, so it is important for all members to stay home and not attend Ringette related activities if they are feeling unwell.

For more information on the transmission of COVID-19 and information on the best practices for avoiding transmission please visit the Public Health Ontario website at <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/diseases-and-conditions/infectious-diseases/respiratory-diseases/novel-coronavirus>

### **Health of Participants**

Ringette Ontario and our local Association's number one priority is the health and safety of our participants. All participants including coaches, officials, players, spectators/parents, volunteers, team staff members and local Association executive members, must agree to provide the following information and follow these guidelines in order to participate in ringette.

- Any individual feeling ill or exhibiting sickness MUST NOT attend ringette activities
- An Association Representative such as a local Board member, coach, team staff member, etc. will have full authority to send a participant home if they come to the event ill. If a parent arrives with symptoms, they can also be sent home along with their athlete.
- Any RO registered individual who is experiencing symptoms MUST notify a designated member of the local Association of the symptoms and the timeline of when symptoms began.



- Any local Association that has a member who is experiencing COVID-19 like symptoms must notify Ringette Ontario and notify all individuals that came into contact with that individual within the last 14 days within the Ringette community. In addition, they must notify their facility who will contact Public Health Ontario.



## Definitions

### **PARTICIPANTS**

For the purposes of this document, any individual participating in ringette activities; coaches, officials, athletes.

### **TEAM**

Typical grouping within an association; because of the circumstances, teams may include individuals from a few different associations to make competition viable and equitable. Restrictions may be placed on team sizes to help facilitate mini-league operation.

### **COHORT/BUBBLE**

A group of people who cannot maintain physical distancing (do not remain 2m apart); a closed group who participate in the same sport or activity. Each player is restricted to participate in only 1 ringette cohort at a time.

### **MINI-LEAGUE**

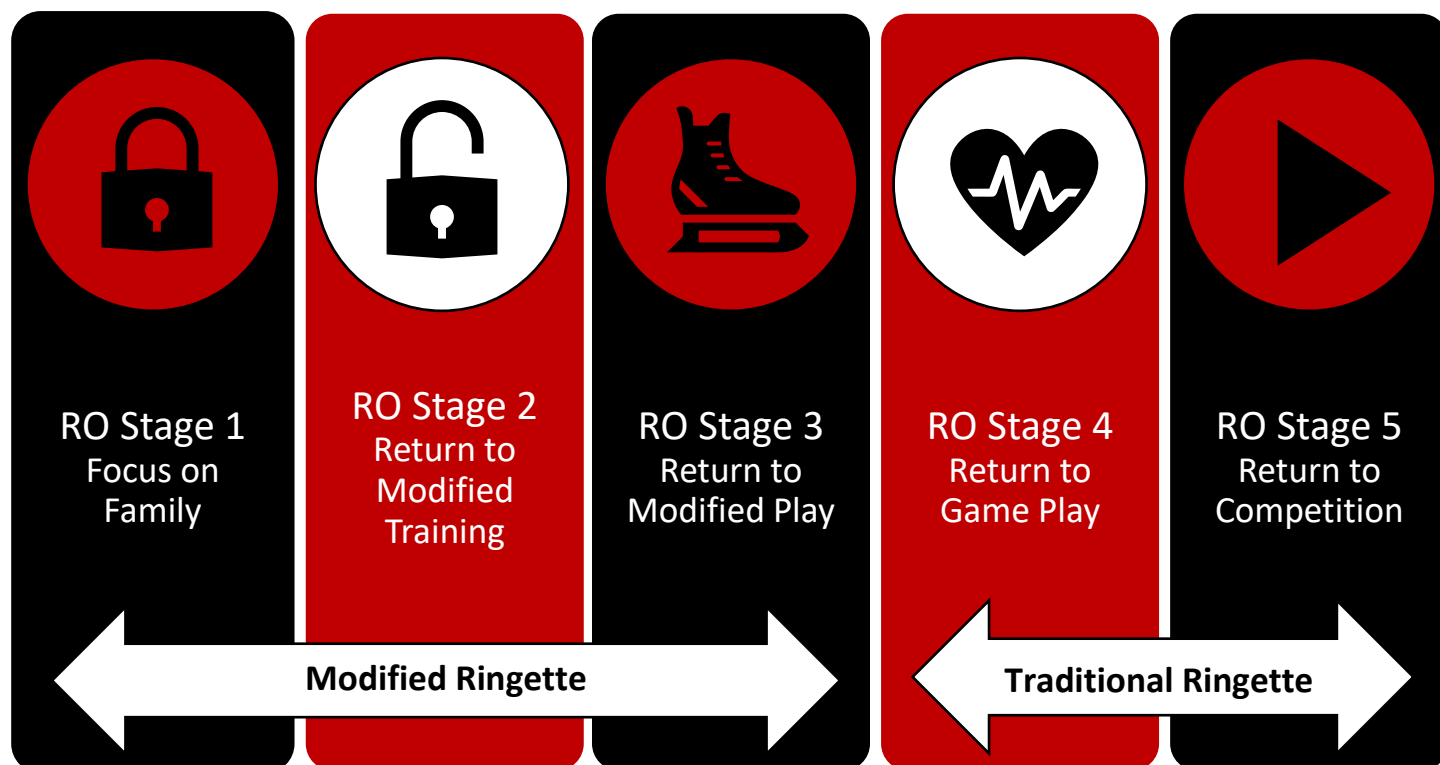
Another name for cohort; groups of teams which practice or play amongst themselves, up to 50 people. Teams in different mini leagues may not play one another.

### **SANCTIONED ACTIVITY OR EVENT**

Ringette Ontario has approved the activity or event. If the activity or event is sanctioned, the bylaws and policies of Ringette Ontario apply, and Ringette Canada's liability and accident insurance is in effect. Members of Ringette Ontario are not permitted to run un-sanctioned events or activities.

## Framework for Return

Ringette Ontario is following a graduated return to ringette. The process will allow for ringette activities to restart in accordance with the Provincial Health Authorities and Regional Health Guidelines. The progressions of returning to ringette could change throughout the season if restrictions by Provincial and Regional Health Authorities lessen or increase. Ringette Ontario is providing the progressions chart below to help Local Ringette Associations with understanding what activities are permitted in the different progressions of returning to ringette. The Ringette Ontario Stages fall within the Ringette Canada Progressions.



Under Phase 1 of the Government of Ontario Phases only Essential Services were permitted to operate. Ringette is not an essential service and if the Government returns to Phase 1 Ringette will be suspended once more.



### **RO STAGE 1 – Focus on Family – No Ringette Activities Permitted**

Ringette Ontario was forced to shut down the end of the 2019-2020 ringette season on March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020. By the following week Ontario was in a lockdown to help control the outbreak of COVID-19 and flatten the curve. Athletes, coaches, parents, and officials were all impacted by the abrupt end but the focus on health, safety and well-being of family and friends was of the utmost importance.

During this stage, Ringette Ontario has been and will be working extremely hard on producing guidelines for associations, plans for development opportunities and collaborating with provincial counterparts on how best to bring ringette back next season.

Ringette Ontario will be in Stage 1 until at least September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020.

**\* UPDATE** – As of July 25, 2020, Ringette Ontario has removed the ban on RO sanctioned activity.

Please note that as we move through the stages not all associations will necessarily be in the same stage. Associations package approvals and continued compliance, local municipality guidelines and public health guidelines will play a factor in advancement through the stages.





## RO STAGE 2 – Return to Modified Training

This progression allows ringette activities to begin once the association has completed their own Return to Ringette Activity package and had it approved by Ringette Ontario.

This progression is focused on individual training and practicing but does allow participants to get back on the ice, if ice is available, under the facilities restrictions on number of participants and local health regulations.

This progression should emphasize small groups and focuses on development of fundamental skills.



## RO STAGE 3 – Return to Modified Play

**This progression must be approved by Ringette Ontario.**

This progression can take place once local municipality has entered STAGE 3 of the Provincial reopening plan.

Arena's may now be open for associations to book ice.

Depending upon your municipality guidelines, Ringette Associations may be provided two options in returning to the ice:

1. Physical Distancing - Team sport may only be practised or played within the facility if they do not allow for physical contact between players or if they have been modified to avoid physical contact between the players.
2. Cohort/Mini League Play - Organized team sports that are practised or played by players in a league may only be practised or played within the facility if the league either,
  - i. contains no more than 50 players and does not permit its teams to play against teams outside of the league, or
  - ii. divides its teams into groups of 50 or fewer players and does not permit teams in different groups to play against one another or against teams outside of the league.

Modified games formats and contact rules are available under RTR Resources.

Players are restricted to 1 cohort.

There is limited travel in this phase and Association based activity is the focus.



## RO STAGE 4 – Return to Game Play

**This progression must be approved by Ringette Ontario.**

This progression allows for exhibition games to be played between Associations and potential league play.

This progression is ONLY permitted once Provincial health authorities allow for contact play to take place outside of a 50-person cohort/mini league.

Team Formation can take place under the supervision of the region.

Travel is still limited to the region; some travel between Leagues within Ontario may be permitted as per Provincial Health Regulations.

## ▶ **RO STAGE 5 – Return to Competition** **This progression must be approved by Ringette Ontario.**

Ringette Competitions such as tournaments, Provincial Championships, League Play and large-scale events can return in this Stage.

This progression can only occur once the Provincial Health Officer has announced the Province of Ontario has entered the final PHASE of the reopening and/or announces that the **GATHERING** Restrictions have been adjusted to allow for gatherings of more than 250 people.

If tournaments are permitted to go ahead, tournaments will have to provide evidence that they are prepared to adhere to health guidelines and restrictions at their event in order to obtain Ringette Ontario sanctioning.

## **Forming a Cohort/Mini League**

Where physical distancing is not possible, such as during ringette competition and any training or practice that requires athletes to come within 3 metres (recommended for moderate to intense physical activity) of one another, cohorts must be used. Cohorts help mitigate the risk of widespread transmission by limiting the number of people that come into close contact with one another. This allows sports teams to return to action in a manner that most closely resembles regular practices and game play.

Even within the cohort, participants should physically distance whenever possible.

It is recommended that organizations cover as little geographical area as possible while forming cohorts.

Cohorts may be organized to form mini leagues to enable competition. Each mini league may consist of multiple teams, up to a maximum of 50 people. Game play is limited to the teams in each mini league.

## **Team Formation**

Regional cooperation is required to make a Modified Ringette season work. Association leaders must work with neighbouring associations to make teams and mini-leagues viable and ensure every player has a place to play.

A cohort of 50 does not have to be divided into unique teams. The entire cohort may operate as one team and individuals within the cohort could be scheduled for specific training and game times. This is a great option for adult players and can work for all ages.

Typical C, B, A, AA leagues may not be advisable depending on the age division and municipality restrictions. For example, in a typical year, if there are only three teams at a division/level, those teams are permitted to travel throughout the province to compete against a variety of other competitors at the same division/level. In a Modified Ringette Season, where travel outside the municipality for competition is not permitted, forming these same three teams mean each team would only see two other competitors for the entirety of the season. To create more variety in the competitors, participants





must be willing to accept a broader range of skill. Associations and Leagues are free to find the desirable balance between a variety of competitors and how broad/ narrow the skill is within each cohort.

Once a traditional ringette season is permitted (as opposed to the Modified Ringette season) typical teams with unique divisions and levels may be formed for participation in tournaments, provincials, Easterns, and Nationals. These events will not take place in a Modified Ringette season. This scenario will be addressed when restrictions are lifted.

## Facilities

Each Facility in the province will have their own set of guidelines for how individuals, user groups and patrons and facility staff must conduct themselves when in the facility.

Facilities will provide signage, access points, managing flow of traffic, and cleaning protocols. Facilities may follow guidelines such as those provided by the Ontario Recreation Facilities Association (ORFA) as an industry standard material: [ORFA Re-Entering & Reopening](#)

Facilities will have guidelines available for all user groups to review and understand when in the facility. *It is paramount that the Associations adhere to the facility guidelines as breach of guidelines could result in loss of access for the Club-Association and rental agreements and contracts will likely be voided.*

All ringette programming conducted by Associations must be sanctioned by Ringette Ontario, will include only Ringette Ontario registered members and will be:

- Registered Associations will be listed on the Ringette Ontario website and be able to present a Ringette Canada Insurance certificate endorsed and provided by Ringette Ontario;
- Be required to complete a tracking document of participation use and an ice surface by ice surface training attendance form;
- Be required to have a COVID-19 Contact Person.

All Associations are required to have a meeting with the facility based on the agenda provided under RO RTR resources.

## Local Association Requirements

All Associations will need to designate a volunteer to be the COVID SAFETY LEADER (CSL). This individual will be the liaison with Ringette Ontario, the Facility and the Association Members who will monitor and track the following information:

- Confirm cohorts and add names to App (or tracking sheet) that they will use for attendance tracking and health screening purposes for all events
- Designated contact for the Association who is notified if a participant has COVID-19.
- Designated contact within the Association and within the League who will receive and communicate our updates on the COVID-19 to participants.

**Local Association Checklists and resources can be found on the RO website at the following link: <https://ringetteontario.com/rtr-covid19/>**



## Registration

- Players U19 and under must register in their local association.
- 18+ are permitted to register with an association outside of their local at their own risk of not being permitted on the ice outside of their public health district.
- Associations are not permitted to create official TRF's until they reach Stage 4 and Team Formation for Sanctioned Tournament play is required.
- Associations must organize an attendance confirmation process for each session. This list should include all participations, coaches, other on-ice helpers, and the parent/guardian that attended.
- All participants must confirm a minimum of 48 hours prior with their Coach if they will be attending an event. Use of a team scheduling software such as RAMP App, TeamSnap, etc. is recommended.
- It is recommended that administrators change any settings in their team scheduling software program so no changes to attendance may be made less than 48 hours prior to the start time of each event.



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## General Health & Safety Guidelines

- If any participants have experienced any symptoms such as coughing, sore throat, fever, shortness of breath, they must not attend activities for 14 days.
- If staff have come in contact with someone experiencing these symptoms, they are not permitted to attend for 14 days.
- A designated volunteer must confirm as part of the activity registration, that all participants and team staff entering the facility, have confirmed their health attestation declaration through the means designated by the Association.
- All members must adhere to all health agency & safety regulations
- All members must adhere to their facility health and safety regulations
- Adhere to facility capacity restrictions
- All players should arrive and leave as per facility regulations
- Wash hands/hand sanitizer frequently and follow facility regulations.
- No spitting
- No chewing tobacco, no sharing of vapes or other tobacco products
- No sharing of water bottles. All participants MUST have individual water bottles
- No sharing of any ringette gear
- No touching or hugging
- Elimination of handshake – Wave to opposition or “air” high fives – salute Referees & say Thank you
- Coaches, athletes and officials should keep rings, equipment and other objects required for play in a clean, separate space at their own homes. Items should be clean and sanitized frequently.
- All participants should carry wipes, hand sanitizer OR pump soap in their equipment bags
- Coaches/Bench Staff should carry extra PPE (masks, hand sanitizer, gloves) in case someone forgets theirs
- Participants should avoid handling equipment with their bare hands.

## Injury Prevention and First Aid

- As participants will potentially not have the ability to warm up prior to the activities it is important that coaches include in their practice plans and activity plans warm-up and cool downs as part of the ice time. Coaches should also encourage participants to do additional cool down routines once they return home to help prevent injury.
- In the event that a coach needs to attend to a participant they will need to follow any facility first aid requirements and the coach attending to the injury should wear a mask and gloves as they will be in close contact with the participant.
- All team first aid kits should carry hand sanitizer, gloves and masks for coaches and trainers to use.

