



It's Time.....

To Return to Hockey

Welcome Back!

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1.0 Introduction

Health and safety have been at the forefront for Hockey Edmonton's Staff, Elite Hockey Management Committee and Board of Directors as they have been thoughtfully planning what a return to hockey participation will look like. Hockey Edmonton has actively engaged with Hockey Canada and Hockey Alberta in developing this "Return to Hockey Plan".

We are in a very fluid, changing environment as new rules and regulations are updated and put in place by our governing authorities, Alberta Health Services and Hockey Alberta. This plan is updated as of **November 30, 2020** and will continue to evolve as we enter different stages as outlined by Alberta Health Services and Hockey Alberta.

This plan relies heavily on the honesty and integrity of associations, athletes and their families and a commitment by all participants to abide by the rules of the plan.

This plan is subject to change based on orders from the Chief Medical Officer, the Province of Alberta, the City of Edmonton, Hockey Alberta and all Hockey Edmonton Elite Hockey Clubs and Participants.

As you review the documents provided in this information package, please note, this is our "New Normal" in our current Covid-19 environment and will not be a typical hockey season as it will look different. It is our belief that the program provided will allow for continued individual player and team development and allow our players to grow on and off the ice. We currently have four phases to the Hockey Edmonton "Return to Hockey" Plan that are outlined throughout this document:

1. **Off Season Skill Development and Training Phase** – The main focus of this phase is focus on enhanced skill development and conditioning to provide players the opportunity to prepare for the upcoming season for their evaluations and tryouts, this phase will take place during the month of August and early September.
2. **Skill Development and Evaluations Phase** – This phase will take place during the month of September and will continue to focus on skill development, training and conditioning and will facilitate creating like skilled 'Cohort Groups' of less than 50 players. The Skill Development and Evaluation phase should be completed through 'Physically Distanced' and "Cohort Groups' (where applicable) for skill and team-based evaluations
3. **Development Season Phase** – Once players have been sorted into 'Cohort Groups', they will now be permitted to practice and compete in mini-game environments within their 'Cohort Groups'. As per Alberta Health Services and Hockey Alberta Cohort rules and regulations, players will not be permitted to play against teams or players outside of their 'Cohort Group' until Government Restrictions are lifted. This phase would begin in September or early October.
4. **Modified Competition Season Phase** – The Modified Competition Season will not commence (for any level of hockey) before November 1, 2020. Depending on Government of Alberta guidelines and recommendations, the start of this component could be delayed until later in the 2020-2021 season. At this phase, teams will be grouped into regional pods, by level of hockey for competition purposes. A Pod will include 3-5 teams, depending on Government regulations and teams will only play within their Pod for the duration of the Phase.
5. **Regular Season** – This would be a return to regular Elite Hockey (AAA and AA) season play and is the final stage of our plan. Depending on the current rules in place by Alberta Health Services



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and Hockey Alberta, this stage could be pushed back or moved ahead during the fall period. Various proposals are available to implement depending on the start date of the regular season which are included in Appendix 1.

2.0 Program Objectives

The Covid-19 Pandemic has forced us to think differently about the way we operate for the 2020-2021 season and into the future. While there will be differences in some of the programming this season, it was developed to meet the needs of the players as we remain focused on the following key objectives:

1. **Safety!** Create a safe and healthy hockey environment for our players, coaches, officials, volunteers and spectators.
 - Safety is paramount, this plan was built in compliance with Alberta Health Services, Hockey Canada and Hockey Alberta guidelines to minimize the risk for all participants.
2. **Fun!** Maintain a culture of Fun! Ensure Participants can enjoy the game they love in a safe environment.
 - Hockey Edmonton is returning to Train and Play in a way that allows kids to have fun and be kids.
3. **Development!** Facilitate a competitive environment that allows players to develop and grow both on and off the ice.
 - Skill and Team Development is essential and can be accomplished in all phases of the Hockey Edmonton's return to Hockey Plan.
4. **Tiering!** Facilitate an environment where players may be grouped in appropriate skill levels.
 - Some tiering ranges may differ slightly than in previous seasons, however, we believe they will be within an acceptable range for skill and team development.
5. **Game Play!** Facilitate an environment where 'Game Play' exists beginning with limited small area games during phases two and three until phase four resumes with regular season game play.
 - Games will operate in a number of different formats up to the point that the regular season may resume. Some of these formats will include the following, 5v5, 4v4, 3v3, etc..
6. **Flexibility to Transition!** These phases will provide us with the flexibility to transition our program as things evolve during the season by way of changes with Alberta Health Services and Hockey Alberta requirements and protocols.
 - This will ensure we continue to adhere to all Alberta Health Services and Hockey Alberta guidelines and protocols while providing a safe and healthy environment for all of our participants.



3.0 Requirements

1. Within the current Alberta Health Services Phase two, there are two different formats that can be considered to operate our programs. Hockey Alberta and Hockey Edmonton will utilize both of these formats in facilitating our programs:
 - **With Physical Distancing** – All participants must remain 2 metres apart at all times including coaches and team personnel.
 - ◆ Skill and Development based programming.
 - **Using Cohort Groups** – A Cohort Group allows up to 50 participants to group together to participate in a program where physical distancing cannot be achieved for on ice activities. However, physical distancing is still required, and players and coaches must maintain a 2 metre distance apart on the players bench and in dressing rooms.
 - ◆ Cohort Groups must remain together for the duration of 'Stage 2' unless participants enter a two-week (14 day) non cohort participation period, after which an athlete may establish themselves as part of a new 'Cohort Group'.
 - Programs should operate within a specified community, zone or region where travel is limited.
2. Any Member Association operating during phase one and two will be required to track all participants and interactions while maintaining records of each session in a secured location for thirty days from the completion of the activity. This will be completed when players complete their daily check in to ensure they are symptom free (More detailed information is found in the Protocols and Safety section of this document).
3. There will be no competition or any interaction between other teams/cohorts during phases one, two and three. Only pre-season camps, skill development and conditioning, systems training and mini games will be permitted within phases one, two and three and only within the same 'Cohort Group'.
4. All Member associations must follow Facility Guidelines
 - Facilities are required to adopt standards as per Alberta Health Services, which may differ slightly depending on the facility and municipality.
 - All Member associations must understand these standards and ensure they are followed.
 - Facilities, not 'Member Associations' will determine spectator access, dressing room use and may have stronger requirements with regards to participation.



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5. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
 - Team Officials and Players are required to wear face masks in facilities and dressing rooms prior to on-ice activities
 - Team Officials are required to wear face masks on the bench when social distancing cannot be achieved.

6. League Play
 - Traditional AAA and AA League Play is not permitted during phases one, two or three.
 - Mini games are only permitted within your 'Cohort Group'.

7. Travel Permits and Tournament Participation
 - Tournaments are not permitted during **STAGE TWO** of Alberta Health Services relaunch during the Hockey Edmonton Development season.
 - No exhibition games, travel or tournament permits will be approved prior to the approval of Hockey Alberta sanctioning for member organizations.



4.0 Protocols and Safety (*New COVID-19 Daily Checklist*)

Responsibilities of Coaches or Event Leaders

Prior to each training Session:

- Communicate with athletes a minimum of 24 hours prior the sessions to provide the session plan so players can review and be aware for social distancing purposes.
- Communicate to see if athletes or family members are feeling unwell or showing signs of COVID-19 symptoms and if so, they are not to attend practices for 14 days.
- Remind athletes and their families of social distancing guidelines; the need to label all equipment; and gathering restrictions both on the ice, in the arena and the parking lot.
- Send practice plan outline (if applicable).
- Disinfect all training equipment.
- Instruct players to eat and use the washroom before they leave home.

During the training Session:

- Upon arrival, all athletes must complete and be recorded on the Hockey Alberta Contact Tracking Spreadsheet which will be administered by the Association running the event and made available to Hockey Edmonton, Hockey Alberta or AHS within 12 hours of request.

<https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/56c020ed-1782-4c6c-bfdd-5af36754471f/resource/6607784e-b42e-46c2-ba76-031c3b0217c5/download/covid-19-relaunch-daily-checklist.pdf>

- Set up all training equipment and sanitize as needed.
- Set up hand sanitizing stations for participant use before, during and after training if not provided by the Arena facility.
- Consider wearing PPE. PPE must be worn if social distancing cannot be maintained (eg. looking after an injured player). PPE is only acceptable if in a situation in which social distancing cannot be maintained. Do not use PPE to allow participants to break social distancing rules during the sessions.
- Ensure only team pucks are used at the practice and that they are sanitized prior, during and after the practice.
*Note, athletes can share the team pucks, but this sharing should be limited with no direct hand contact
- Ensure athletes are not touching their face during activity.

After Training Session:

- Ensure athletes have retrieved all their personal equipment. (Water bottles, etc)
- Do not touch their equipment unless you are in the same household.
- Ensure athletes and coaches wash or sanitize hands again.
- Sanitize all training equipment, including team pucks and all commonly touched surfaces e.g. locks.



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- No post training meeting communication on the ice, in the arena or in the parking lot. Please communicate virtually using email, text, team snap or another form of electronic communication.
- Association Event Managers must ensure that their list of event participants is uploaded using the Hockey Alberta link provided by Hockey Edmonton (in the email containing the event sanction information). This is required as soon as the event has been completed.

https://cloud.rampinteractive.com/hockeyedmonton/files/2020-21%20Season/Copy%20of%20Copy%20of%20Appendix_3-Contact_Tracing_Form_HEDM.xlsx

COVID Check –In

24 hours prior to each session, or when arriving at the session, the coach or leader will communicate with all players and families to do the Hockey Alberta health status check. If any athlete or family member of the athlete is or has experienced any of the following symptoms, they will not be permitted to participate in any events, training etc. for the next 14 days or until 14 days after the last symptom, whichever is longer. This information will be held in confidence by the coach:

<https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/56c020ed-1782-4c6c-bfdd-5af36754471f/resource/6607784e-b42e-46c2-ba76-031c3b0217c5/download/covid-19-relaunch-daily-checklist.pdf>

- Fever (Temperature of 38 degrees Celsius or higher)
- Cough (Continuous, more than usual, not related to other known causes or conditions such as asthma)
- Shortness of breath (Continuous, out of breath, unable to breath deeply, not related to other known causes or conditions).
- Loss of sense of smell or taste (Not related to other causes or conditions like allergies)
- Any of the following other symptoms – Chills, Sore throat/Painful swallowing, Runny Nose, Congestion, Fatigued, Nausea, Vomiting, Diarrhea, Unexplained loss of appetite, muscle aches, headache, conjunctivitis (pink eye) –See Update to AHS changes for the above mentioned symptoms.
- Have been in close contact with a person who has seen a doctor and has been diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Have travelled outside of Canada in the past 14 days or has been ordered to self-isolate since returning from travel.
- Have been ordered to self-isolate.
- Any person who develops symptoms while at a Hockey Edmonton\Hockey Alberta sanctioned event should leave immediately, seek medical attention and inform the coach or manager within 2 hours of leaving.

<https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/56c020ed-1782-4c6c-bfdd-5af36754471f/resource/6607784e-b42e-46c2-ba76-031c3b0217c5/download/covid-19-relaunch-daily-checklist.pdf>



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What to do if a participant answers YES to any of the mandatory check in questions or begins to show symptoms during the training session:

- The participant is immediately removed from the session and sent home as safely as possible
- Hockey Edmonton Discipline needs to be notified immediately following any participant being removed from any session
- Hockey Edmonton Discipline will contact Hockey Alberta to facilitate the required AHS protocols under the contact tracking guidelines

https://www.hockeyalberta.ca/uploads/source/Return_To_Hockey/Appendix_5-Positive_Test.pdf

General Stay Safe Measures:

Please follow the current provincial stay safe measures as well as the following:

- Driving alone or with people they are living with or Cohorted (no carpooling).
- Staggered approach to the site e.g. physical distancing of 2 meters.
- Avoiding touching common surfaces while in public.
- Come straight to the Arena from home and go straight home.
- Practice good hygiene by:
 - Coughing into a sleeve.
 - Sneezing into a tissue.
 - Avoid touching your face.
 - Washing hands thoroughly and frequently with soap and water.
 - When water and soap is not immediately available, using hand sanitizers with a minimum concentration of 60% alcohol.
 - Wash hands prior to and immediately following practice/ training, using the washroom, after handling equipment.
 - Sanitize your phones and devices often, leave them in the car or at home when possible.
- Help each other with helpful reminders, this is new to everyone.

Practice/ Training Protocol:

Physical distancing has been identified as one of the most effective strategies to prevent the spread of COVID-19. With that in mind the following are the minimum protocols that MUST be adhered to for team training/ practice:

- All participants will wash their hands before coming to training.
- All participants will use hand sanitizer:
 - At the beginning of all events.
 - During all breaks prior to drinking water or touching any personal items.
 - Prior to leaving the sessions.
- All participants are required to maintain at least 2 meters distance from each other and avoid person to person contact.
- Coaches will coach from a safe distance at least 2 meters from athletes.
- Nonessential activities that require close contact between individuals will not be permitted.
- NO SHARING OF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:



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- Sticks, gloves or any other personal equipment.
- water bottles.
- NO SPITTING.
- Participants will avoid touching the face.
- All participants will be expected to follow the social distancing rules put in place by the City of Edmonton for Arena Users or the rules set by non-City of Edmonton facilities. (ie. Argyle or River Cree Arenas)
- Player equipment and clothing must be cleaned with disinfectant where appropriate and or washed prior to each session.
- No unnecessary physical contact e.g. high fives.
- All commonly touched surfaces will be disinfected after each session by Arena Staff.
- Gear, equipment etc. must be sanitized prior to each use.
- Coaches may request the support of an assistant coach or parent to help with sanitizing or ensuring physical distancing is occurring throughout the session.

Spectators of Hockey Edmonton and Hockey Alberta sanctioned events must maintain physical distancing with people who are not from the same household and adhere to the following:

- Staggered approach to the facility
- No yelling or cheering
- No SPITTING
- Avoid touching your face.
- Wash your hands frequently and/or use hand sanitizer often.
- Disinfect clothes and equipment following attendance at a session.
- Wipe frequently touched surfaces including cell phones, tablets etc.
- Please consult the following website for more information about COVID 19: <https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx>

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 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

Reporting a Positive Covid Case

If an attendee test 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 representative 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 the 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.



5.0 Facilities (*New Information*)

All Hockey Edmonton Member Clubs, Districts and Operating Areas are required to follow the guidelines set forth by the facility they are utilizing whether a Municipality owned facility or a Private Arena. City of Edmonton Facility Guidelines are posted below for your reference.



As the City of Edmonton relaunches Arena operations, we ask for your full cooperation and commitment to follow the new facility guidelines of the Alberta Health Services Phase 2 reopening. Our first priority is the health and safety of our customers, users, and employees. Please review the additional City of Edmonton Arena Guidelines below:

Physical Distancing: Maintain 2-meter physical distancing between people, except those who reside in the same household or who belong to an existing cohort.

Limit Contact only 50 people: Where sports and activities cannot be modified to maintain distance, groups must limit the number of contacts between different participants. This is done by playing within sport cohorts of up to 50 people including participants, officials, coaches, and trainers. Only 50 people will be allowed on the ice at one time.

Pre-screening measures: Stay home if you are sick or displaying any symptoms of COVID-19. Follow the prescreen procedures outlined by your organization or Alberta Health Services.

Cleaning and Sanitizing - Additional cleaning and sanitizing measures will be in place to ensure a safe and health environment for everyone. Arena staff will be disinfecting all areas of the arena and common touch points in between users.

Arrival Times: Players and coaches can enter the facility 15 to 30 minutes before their booking and must exit the facility 15 minutes after their booking. Facilities will promote physical distancing by promoting one-way traffic flow to reduce interactions between groups. Common area chairs and tables may not be available to reduce gathering areas and to promote physical distancing.



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Arrive ready to train or play: Participants are encouraged to arrive with their required equipment on, as dressing room space will be limited to accommodate physical distancing. Groups or teams may be provided with more than 1 dressing room to allow for adequate space where possible. Bring a pre-filled, labelled water bottle. Bottle fillers are available but drinking fountains are not available.

Dressing Rooms limited: Dressing room space will be extremely limited in order to provide greater physical distancing between individuals and groups. Shower facilities are not available. Try to minimize contacting high-touch point surfaces such as door handles and going in and out of dressing rooms. Indoor warm-up space is not available at this time.

Additional support required: User Groups with younger children requiring assistance with skate tying should consider how to manage this within physical distancing guidelines. Skate tying prior to arrival and the use of skate guards is strongly recommended.

Limited Spectators: Spectators will not have access to the facility until the scheduled booking time, and should exit the facility as soon as the booking time slot has ended. Spectators will not be allowed in the participant areas. Physical distancing should be maintained and masks are recommended for spectators. There is limited spectator space. Spectator areas are restricted to 25% of total seating to a maximum of 100 people as per the Alberta Health Guidelines.

All Arena Users: Sport and recreation organizations are responsible for keeping track of all participants for each activity for the purpose of contact tracing in the event of an outbreak. Please refer to the Alberta Health Services Guidelines for **COVID-19 Relaunch Guidance for Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation - Stage 2 for more information:** [Return to Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation](#) .

Specific-Sport Guidelines: Many sport governing bodies have developed, or are in the process of developing sport-specific guidelines to provide direction on how their sports' activities can be modified to comply with Alberta Health Services (AHS) and Government directives regarding physical distancing and avoiding the sharing of common equipment. Groups are expected to follow the sport governing body's guidelines with respect to these modifications. It is also the group's responsibility, if applicable, to ensure that sanctioned activities are permitted through their association and/or sport governing body.

Welcome back: We look forward to welcoming you, your organization, and its members back to City of Edmonton arenas within the new guidelines and facility procedures. Facility specific measures may be in place at some arenas. Your collaboration and communication is very important as we go through the reopening and relaunch phases of Arenas. The health and safety of everyone is our priority. If you have any questions please let us know.



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Please note: The City of Edmonton will continue to monitor the virus and its impacts to public health, in partnership with the [The Government of Alberta](#) and the [Government of Canada](#). As this situation changes, we will keep you informed. Information about the City's response can be found on City of Edmonton website [COVID-19 PAGE](#).

For a complete list of City of Edmonton and Surrounding facilities spectator limits, [Click Here](#) to access the most up to date information.

6.0 Refunds

This is an unprecedented time which makes predicting the future incredibly difficult. There are still many unanswered questions and uncertainty around what may lie ahead in the future which makes it difficult to have concrete answers about refund policies in the event of a lockdown, quarantine or other event that impacts the season.

Each Club, District or Operating area is responsible for their own refund policies. If you are interested in learning more, please contact your Club, District or Operating Area.



7.0 Return to Hockey

Facilitating a safe return to Hockey that meets the guidelines of Alberta Health Services relaunch strategy for stage two is paramount. As we have mentioned previously, Hockey Alberta and Hockey Edmonton will be utilizing two distinct procedures in delivering programming, either **Physically Distanced** or using **Cohorts**. Hockey is a contact sport and while we can operate skill development sessions using physical distancing, we understand that in order to meet all of the key objectives of our program, we will need to use 'Cohort Groups' for various phases of our Return to Play.

Hockey Alberta Return to Play Plan of September 3, 2020 states that in order for players to change 'Cohort Groups', they must self isolated for a 14-day period prior to joining a new 'Cohort Group'

Cohort Information from Alberta Health Services for Sports Teams

Definition of Cohorts:

A COVID-19 cohort – also known as bubbles, circles, or safe squads – are small groups of the same people who can interact regularly without staying 2 metres apart.

Sports Cohorts

Stage 2 of the Government of Alberta's Relaunch Plan identifies types of Cohorts and the guideline for those. Even while 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

- 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 Cohort should always include the same people.
 - Cohorts limit the risk of disease transmission because they reduce the number of people with whom players/participants have close contact.
- The maximum number of individuals that can form a Cohort is 50.
 - The 50 person maximum 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 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.



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- If an individual or team member wishes to change Cohorts, they should not participate in a 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 comprised of new Cohort teams 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 is followed.

Physical Distancing

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



AAA and AA 2020-2021 Season Timelines

The province remains in a restricted state, and the primary concern for Hockey Edmonton is that any programs offered as part of its Return to Play plan focus on the health and safety of all participants. The intent is not to re-create the regular season structure, but to offer local/regional training and development opportunities before proceeding to the regular season. Safety, not competition, is paramount.

Stage of Return to Play	Dates	Activities Permitted
Off Season Skill Development and Training	August 1-31st	<p>Activities permitted for Skill Development and Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Off-ice sessions • Skills camps • Development programs • Hockey schools <p>Programs may be delivered using:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical distancing; <p>Associations must ensure that permit is obtained from Hockey Alberta through the Hockey Edmonton application process</p>
Skill Development and Evaluations	Sept 1-30th	<p>Activities permitted for Evaluation and Team Formation</p> <p>Skills Sessions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-Ice Practices • Off-Ice Training • In Association Game Play (3v3, 4v4 or 5v5), Players can be grouped by age and/or skill level. <p>Programs may be delivered using:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Distancing; or • Cohort Programming can assist associations to determine skill levels of players.
Development Season/Ex. Series	October 1-TBD	<p>Activities Permitted During Development Season</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills Sessions • On-Ice Practices • Off-Ice Training • Inter-squad Game Play/Exhibition Series (JRA, AAA, AA) <p>Programs may be delivered using:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Distancing; or • Cohort Programming to allow game play between associations if November 1st league play date is delayed and/or cohort sizes increase.
NEW Modified Competition Season	TBD (No earlier than Nov 1)	<p>Activities Permitted During Modified Competition Season</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills Sessions • On-Ice Practices • Off-Ice Training • Game play in Pods <p>This phase provides the opportunity to finalize any tryouts/evaluations, register rosters and prepare for an eventual return to Regular Season, when permitted.</p> <p>Tournaments: TBD</p>
Regular Season	TBD	<p>Return to Normal Game Play</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills Sessions • On-Ice Practices • Off-Ice Training • League Play <p>Tournaments TBD</p>



A. Off Season Skill Development and Training

The purpose of this phase one, off season skill development and training is to provide Club Members and the ability to hold skill and conditioning camps during the month of August 2020. This phase will be in place from August 1-31st inclusive and will be entirely Physically Distanced.

This will allow Members and players to complete any off ice, on ice, skill development and hockey school training during the month of August prior to the start of the Skill Development and Evaluations phase

B. Skill Development and Evaluations

The purpose of the Skill Development and Tryout phase is to group players of similar skill. This process will be similar to the tryout and evaluation processes that occur each year in our Clubs. One key difference this year is that to ensure the safety of the players and the help reduce the number of player to player contact situations, these sessions will be entirely 'Physically Distanced' or using 'Cohort Group's where applicable. Once we are able to place the players in Hockey Edmonton Cohort Groups, players will be permitted to engage in drills where they will come into close contact with other players.

When Club's have completed their initial skill sessions to determine skill rankings among their players, they will create 'Cohort Groups' of between 45-50 players (age category and registration dependent). We will communicate further on numbers of coaches and team officials who should join the 'Cohort Group' and those that should remain Physically Distanced. It is the expectation that all Coaches and Team Officials will remain Physically Distanced during the initial skills evaluation sessions.

C. Development Season

During the Skill Development and Tryout phase, Club's will create similar sized 'Cohort Groups' of no more than 50 players and team officials based on rankings from the physically distanced evaluation sessions. All players and team officials included in the registered 'Cohort Group' will need to ensure they remain in the same 'Cohort Group' during the Alberta Health Services phase two relaunch, or until a two week break can be facilitated in order to create new 'Cohort Groups' as per the Hockey Alberta return to hockey plan.

Cohorts

- 45-50 players and team officials (depending on age category and registration breakdown)
- Players will now have the opportunity to compete as a group (practice and play together)
- Associations may choose to practice with the entire 'Cohort Group' on the ice, as long as the facility requirements are being followed, or, split them into smaller groups
- Within the 'Cohort Group' players do not need to be physically distanced on the ice but need to separate on the players bench and dressing room facilities
- Within this 'Cohort Group', 'Mini Teams' will be created to facilitate game play



Cohort Teams

- Club's are encouraged to create two evenly balanced 'Teams' of between 17-20 players (with goalies) within each 'Cohort Group'
- Club's will have the ability to rebalance 'Teams' if they are not competitive
- Club's will have the ability to assign specific coaches to a 'Team' or move them between teams to share resources and experience as long as they remain 'Physically Distanced'.
- 'Games' would be scheduled by each Association, in partnership with Hockey Edmonton for ice availability
 - Hockey Edmonton will provide guidelines for number of games, length, uses of officials, bench protocol, etc

D. Modified Competition Season

When Government of Alberta restrictions on travel and the number of people allowed in a gathering are lifted, Hockey Alberta and our sanctioned leagues will have a plan in place for a safe and productive transition into a 'Modified Competition Season'. Communication will be integral to ensure everyone is educated on what precautions are in place and what alterations to traditional regular season structure exist.

This Modified Competition Season will not commence (for any level of hockey) before November 1, 2020. Depending on Government of Alberta guidelines and recommendations, the start of this phase could be delayed until later in the 2020-2021 season.

E. Regular Season

Hockey Edmonton and Hockey Alberta AAA and AA leagues will continue to follow the lead of Alberta Health Services and Hockey Alberta in order to determine an appropriate time to transition from the 'Modified Competition Season' to a normal return to hockey 'Regular Season'. We remain optimistic that we will be able to transition to a traditional 'Regular Season' in accordance with past season guidelines but will only do so once it is safe for all of our participants and we have received approval from Alberta Health Services and Hockey Alberta

By evaluating players during the Skill Development and Tryout Phases, we will be able to transition from the 'Development Season' to 'Regular Season' without any further evaluation of players. Coaches and Team officials will be able to take into account hockey IQ, compete level, and improvement over the 'Development Season' prior to splitting the players into formal teams. Therefore, formal teams will not be created solely based on the skill evaluations and players will be able to advance on their previous rankings. In this scenario, teams should be more accurately evaluated for the 'Regular Season' than they have in the past with the benefits of both the Tryout and Development Season phases.



8.0 Referees

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 2020-2021 season.

- For new officials, and returning Level I and II Officials, in person certification clinics will not start until Thanksgiving weekend. The current targeted start date is the weekend of October 17-18, but that is subject to change based on developments within the province regarding Covid-19.
- For Levels III-VI officials, they are eligible to sign up for virtual (video conference) sessions to obtain their certification for 2020-2021. These clinics will be available starting in later September.
- For any official that was certified in 2019-2020, that certification remains valid until January 31, 2021. Normally, certification from the previous season remains valid until December 31, but for this season, Hockey Canada has provided a special exemption extending that deadline by one month.

Clinic registration will begin in mid-September (specific date TBD). Check the Hockey Alberta Officials website (officials.hockeyalberta.ca) for updates and current information pertaining to officiating and the 2020-2021 season.

These revised timelines for clinics and certification align with on-ice officials are not required until the 'Modified Competition Season' phase of the Return to Hockey Plan. Once Officials begin to work on the ice, Hockey Canada has developed a set of COVID-19 officiating guidelines and an FAQ. Information can be found in the Hockey Canada website (<https://hockeycanada.ca/en-ca/return-to-hockey/plans/officiating>)

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



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- o 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.

9.0 Coaches, Team Officials and Off-Ice 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 2020-2021 season. Certification programs will include a combination of in-person clinics (using physical distancing) and online programming.

Hockey Alberta will maintain the same requirements for all Coaches and Team Officials for the 2020-2021 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.

Coaching During Practices and Games

When participating via Cohorting:

- Teams 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.



10.0 FAQ's Hockey Edmonton Return to Play (*New Information*)

General Questions

1. When do the restrictions on Minor Hockey End?

Based on information we have at this time, all levels of sport will be restricted for at least three weeks starting November 27, 2020. Our understanding is that restrictions will be in place until at least December 18, 2020, and the government will further review restrictions prior to December 15, 2020.

2. Are all Hockey Activities part of the new Government Restrictions?

Yes, This restriction includes all hockey related activities under the Hockey Edmonton umbrella, Including Jr. B and Jr. C programs. The restriction includes (but is not limited to) the following activities surrounding all teams:

- i. No games
- ii. No off-ice sessions (unless virtual)
- iii. No team dryland
- iv. No team building (unless virtual)
- v. No skills sessions

3. Are we able to practice outside as a team?

All levels of sport (whether indoor or outdoor) are currently restricted. Hockey Alberta is currently working SPAR (Sports, Physical Activity and Recreation) to determine whether or not outdoor activity could still be permitted by applying outdoor social gathering limits of 10 people to the activity and still prohibiting the use of change rooms. With these restrictions in place, no activity will be sanctioned or insured for members in the identified areas with targeted health restrictions.

4. Can we do individual training sessions?

The current Government restrictions will only permit one-on-one training. No team/group activities are permitted to operate. Our understanding is that facilities can rent ice for one-on-one training only, all inquiries surrounding this must be directed to your facility of choice. The City of Edmonton has advised that all arenas, excluding the Downtown Community Rink which will be left open to accommodate the World Junior Hockey Championships, will be closed December 1-December 18, 2020 and not available for bookings.

5. Is Hockey Edmonton applying for an exemption to continue operations during the current restrictions?

Hockey Edmonton has actively explored this option and will do everything we can to provide our players the opportunity to play if the government restrictions permit. Currently, it is our understanding that exemptions will only be considered for activities that have aggressive testing protocols and operate in a 'bubble' format similar to the NHL or World Juniors. We will continue to research this option and communicate as we receive new information.



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6. Is Hockey Edmonton lobbying the Government for minor hockey activities to continue during the current restrictions?

Hockey Edmonton is actively looking at ways to communicate the benefits of youth sport, specifically hockey, and the robust protocols we have had in place since the onset. However, we do not expect restrictions to be lifted prior to December 18, 2020.

7. Are we permitted to travel outside the Government defined 'Purple Restricted' areas to participate in Hockey activities?

No, all Hockey Edmonton associations and team hockey activities are strictly prohibited. Based on clarification from Hockey Alberta via SPAR, teams are not permitted to travel to a community that is not currently with a 'purple region' to host a game or practice.

8. Who should we contact if we identify operators or individuals acting outside the public health order?

Violations of Public Health Orders are subject to fines of up to \$1,000 and complaints can be submitted to the Public Health Inspectors by [Clicking Here](#).

9. Will Hockey Edmonton or EFHL be releasing a schedule for the remainder of the 20-21 season?

Prior to the government announcements, Hockey Edmonton had released schedules up to the end of the year for the 'modified competition' or 'league tiering' season. All games have been cancelled up to and including December 18, 2020. Hockey Edmonton will be reviewing the future schedule and options available once the government has confirmed when these current restrictions will be lifted.

10. Will Hockey Edmonton's season be extended due to the pause?

Hockey Edmonton and its member organizations, including Interlock MHA's are in the early stages of analysis whether an extension to the season is possible, and if so, identifying what needs to be done. There are a lot of stakeholders that would need to be involved in any discussions including Hockey Canada, Hockey Alberta, Facility Operators and other sports organizations to name a few. Rest assured, Hockey Edmonton will continue to look at all available options to provide the best season possible under the current circumstances.

11. What are some ways we can engage with our players and teams during the pause?

Hockey Edmonton encourages teams to participate in virtual team activities using Zoom or another online meeting application.

12. Is there DATA that indicates that widespread COVID transmission in Minor Hockey?

Hockey Edmonton and its member organizations have worked hard to set up guidelines and protocols to keep our members safe and our programs running during the pandemic. To date, we have been forced to temporarily pause a few cohorts across the EFHL and most of these pauses were done out of an abundance of caution. Due to the quick actions of our teams and associations, we have seen minimal transmission within a hockey environment.



11.0 Appendices

Appendix 1 (Tentative League Start Dates-Hockey Alberta)

Hockey Alberta League	Tentative Start Date
AEHL U18 AAA Alberta Elite Hockey League	October 14th
AFHL U18 AAA Alberta Female Hockey League	October 30th
NAHL U18 AA Northern Alberta Hockey League	October 27th
AFHL U18 Elite Alberta Female Hockey League	November 15th
AEHL U16 AAA Alberta Elite Hockey League	October 31st
ERHL U16 AA Edmonton Rural Hockey League	October 29th
AEHL U15 AAA Alberta Elite Hockey League	October 14th
NAHL U15 AA Northern Alberta Hockey League	October 20th
AFHL U15 Elite Alberta Female Hockey League	November 15th
ACRHL U13 AA Alberta Capital Region Hockey League	October 24th



Appendix 2 (Hockey Alberta Return to Play Guidelines)

