



It's Time.....

To Return to Hockey

Welcome Back!

Return to Hockey Plan-Community Hockey

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1.0 Introduction (*New Information Alberta Health Stages*)

Health and safety have been at the forefront for Hockey Edmonton's Staff 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 **February 8, 2021** 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 and EFHL 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 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' skill-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 early October.
4. **Alberta Health Stage One Return** – The Alberta Health Stage One return announced on February 6th will allow minor sports for athletes aged 18 years and younger to return to small group training ten people and under including coaches and trainers. Training will be permitted in both indoor and outdoor settings with a 3 metre physical distance for indoor events and a 2 metre physical distance for outdoor events. Players are to remain masked at all times except when they are participating in the activity, coaches and trainers are to be masked at all times. There is limited access to change room facilities during this phase.
5. **Alberta Health Stage Two Return** – To be determined but cannot occur until March 1, 2021 at the earliest and the provincial hospitalization number must be below 450 patients on a daily average.



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6. **Alberta Health Stage Three Return** – To be determined but cannot occur until March 22, 2021 at the earliest and provincial hospitalization numbers must be below 300 patients on a daily average and cannot occur until 21 days following the implementation of Stage 2.
7. **Alberta Health Stage Four Return** – To be determined but cannot occur until April 12, 2021 at the earliest and provincial hospitalization numbers must be below 150 patients on a daily average and cannot occur until 21 days following the implementation of Stage 3.

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 phase 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 phase 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.



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3.0 Requirements (Only Physical Distancing Activities of 10 or less are permitted)

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 3 metres apart at all times for indoor events and 2 metres at all times for outdoor events including coaches and team personnel which is limited to a maximum of 10 participants including coaches, ice may be split in half to provide for one coach and nine players per side, a barrier or pylons are recommended to ensure no mixing of players or coaches. Coaches and trainers must be masked at all times. Players must be masked at all times with the exception of when participating in the activity.
 - ◆ Skill and Development based programming.
 - **Using Cohort Groups (Not currently permitted)**– 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 Alberta Health Stage 1 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 Alberta Health Stage One. Only skill development and conditioning will be permitted within Stage One, we will communicate once further restrictions are lifted as we enter Stages 2, 3 and 4.
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
 - Players are not required to wear masks when participating in the on ice activity
 - Coaches and trainers are required to be masked at all times during practices on and off the ice
 - **Team Officials are required to wear face masks on the bench at all times during all EFHL sanctioned games mandated by the EFHL Board of Directors effective November 19, 2020.**

6. League Play
 - Traditional EFHL League Play is not permitted during Stage 1.
 - We will determine if competition or game play can be considered once Alberta Health moves to stages 2, 3, and 4.

7. Travel Permits and Tournament Participation
 - Permits will be approved for teams practicing on facility ice outside the City of Edmonton
 - Tournaments are not permitted during **Stage One** of Alberta Health relaunch.
 - 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

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.
- The AHS daily activity checklist needs to be completed to ensure players and team staff are symptom free prior to attending any game or practice session, details are provided below in the Covid-19 check in section.
- 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 and after the practice.
*Note, athletes can share the team pucks, but this sharing should be limited with no direct hand contact
- Remind athletes not to touch 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>

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 and Operations needs to be notified immediately following any participant being removed from any session



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- 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 (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 for Physical Distancing:

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 3 meters distance from each other and avoid person to person contact unless they are participating in a practice within their designated 'Cohort Group'
- Coaches will coach from a safe distance at least 3 meters from athletes.
- Nonessential activities that require close contact between individuals will not be permitted.
- NO SHARING OF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:
 - 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)



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- 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 (Not Currently permitted)

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 3 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 3 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 3 metres.

Off-ice officials (for example timekeepers, penalty box staff, etc.) must either wear a mask.

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).



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For Players participating via Cohorting (*Not Currently permitted*): 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 three-metre physical distancing for indoor events and two-metre physical distancing for outdoor events, 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 tests 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.



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5.0 Facilities

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 Step 1 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:

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.

Mandatory Masks: Masks are required to access the facility. Participants must be masked at all times, except during the training activity.

No Spectators: Spectators are not permitted at this 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.

Arrival Times: Players and coaches can enter the facility 15-25 minutes before their booking and must exit the facility 10 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.

Arrive ready to train: Participants are encouraged to arrive with their required equipment on, as dressing room space will be limited to accommodate physical distancing. Groups 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.



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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.

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.

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.

Specific-Sport Guidelines: Groups are expected to follow the sport governing body's guidelines with respect to 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. 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.

Activities Must be Compliant with [Current AHS Regulations](#)

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](#).

Please Note: The Opti-Plex Board systems currently used for U7 Sr. Timbits and U9 Novice programming are now approved for use in all City of Edmonton facilities where they are available. Please reference the City of Edmonton standard operating procedures for use of the Board Systems on the Hockey Edmonton website on the Return to Hockey page.



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.

Cohort Groupings Currently Not Permitted by Alberta Health

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.



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EFHL 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
A. 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.
B. Development Season	October 1-29	<p>Activities Permitted During Development Season</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills Sessions • 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 to allow game play between associations if November 1st league play date is delayed and/or cohort sizes increase.
C. Return to Train Small Groups (Stage 1)	February 8-TBD	<p>Activities Permitted During Development Season</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practices are and conditioning activities are permitted for indoor and outdoor, team based minor sports/activities and school athletics • Games are not permitted • All participants must be 18 years old or younger except coaches and trainers • Maximum ten people including players, coaches and trainers • Ten people per half is permitted by Alberta Health and Hockey Alberta <p>Programs may be delivered using:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Distancing of at least 3 metres must be maintained at all times for indoor sessions and 2 metres for outdoor sessions, coaches or trainers may enter this physical distancing space for brief interactions to correct technique • Participants must be masked at all times, except during training activity, Coaches/Trainers, etc must remain masked at all times • Access to change rooms must be limited, including accelerated arrival and departure, emergencies (first aid), and washroom use
D. Additional Restrictions Lifted Under Stage 2	March 1 earliest (TBD)	<p>Activities Permitted During Alberta Health Stage 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practices as above included in Stage 1 • TBD • TBD • TBD
E. Additional Restrictions Lifted Under Stage 3	March 22 earliest (TBD)	<p>Activities Permitted During Alberta Health Stage 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practices as above included in Stage 1 • TBD • TBD • TBD
F. Additional Restrictions Lifted Under Stage 4	April 12 earliest (TBD)	<p>Activities Permitted During Alberta Health Stage 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practices as above included in Stage 1 • TBD • TBD • TBD



A. Skill Development and Evaluations

The purpose of the Skill Development and Evaluations phase is to group players of similar skill. This process will be similar to the evaluation and tiering processes that occur each year in our Clubs, Districts and Operating Areas. One key difference this year is that to ensure the safety of the players and to help reduce the number of player-to-player contact situations, these sessions will be entirely Physically Distanced. 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 associations 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.

B. Development Season

Club, District, Operating Area or Interlock MHA Based Play

During the Skill Development and Evaluation phase, associations 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

Mini Teams

- Associations are encouraged to create four evenly balanced 'Mini Teams' of between 9-12 players (with goalies) within each 'Cohort Group'
- Associations have the ability to rebalance 'Mini Teams' if they are not competitive as long as players remain within their 'Cohort Group'
- Associations have the ability to assign specific coaches to a 'Mini Team' or move them between teams to share resources and experience
- 'Mini 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



C. Stage 1 Small Training Groups (*New Information*)

Activities Permitted During Development Season

- Practices and conditioning activities are permitted for indoor and outdoor, team based minor sports/activities and school athletics
- Games are not permitted
- All participants must be 18 years old or younger except coaches and trainers
- Maximum ten people including players, coaches and trainers
Programs may be delivered using:
 - Physical Distancing of at least 3 metres must be maintained at all times for indoor sessions and 2 metres for outdoor sessions, coaches or trainers may enter this physical distancing space for brief interactions to correct technique
 - Participants must be masked at all times, except during training activity, Coaches/Trainers, etc must remain masked at all times
 - Access to change rooms must be limited, including accelerated arrival and departure, emergencies (first aid), and washroom use
 - On ice coaches must have a minimum requirement of being registered as a coach for the 2020-2021 season and have their Respect in Sport Activity Leader. Although not mandatory it is recommended that the on ice coach also has Hockey Canada Safety Course.

Examples Age Division practice structures:

U7 (Roster size up to 36):

Group A 1 hour ice slot (9 players one coach on each side of ice separated by divider)

Flood

Group B 1 hour ice slot (9 players one coach on each side of ice separated by divider)

U9 (Roster size up to 18):

Group A 1 hour ice slot (9 players one coach on each side of ice separated by divider)

U11 (Roster Size up to 18)

Group A 1 hour ice slot (9 players one coach on each side of ice separated by divider)

U13-U18 (Roster Size up to 19)

Group A 1 hour ice slot (9 players one coach on each side of ice separated by divider)

D. Stage 2 Alberta Health Permitted Activities

When Government of Alberta restrictions are further eased, additional information will be provided once confirmed by Alberta Health.

E. Stage 3 and 4 Alberta Health Permitted Activities

When Government of Alberta restrictions are further eased, additional information will be provided once confirmed by Alberta Health.



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 (*Games are currently not permitted*)

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
 - o For example, working on the players' bench side, faceoffs and gatherings after whistles.
 - Consider use of an electronic whistle to facilitate mask wearing



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- 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 (New Information)

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: **(Not currently Permitted)**

- 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.
- **For all EFHL sanctioned games, team officials are required to wear a mask on the bench which has been mandated by the EFHL Board of Directors effective November 19, 2020.**
- 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 three-metre physical distancing from all other participants for indoor activities and a two-metre distance for outdoor activities, and wear masks at all times during the activity.**
- **Team Officials must wear masks at all times**

Off Ice Officials/Timekeeping Duties (Not currently Permitted)

Effective November 19, 2020 the EFHL Board of Directors have mandated that the Home team during any sanctioned EFHL game will be responsible for providing timekeepers for clock and game sheet management and is limited to two people. The EFHL Board of Directors recommends that in a best case scenario that both people come from the same family cohort if possible.



10.0 FAQ'S Restrictions on Hockey (*New Information*)

General Questions

1. **What does the February 6th announcement by Alberta Health mean since Hockey Alberta already cancelled the season?**

Based on information we have at this time, minor sports for athletes aged 18 years old and younger are permitted to return to train in groups of ten people maximum including coaches, trainers and team staff. Although Hockey Alberta cancelled the league portion of the 2020-2021 season for all of its minor leagues, this action did not cancel "Hockey" as member associations of Hockey Alberta are encouraged to provide hockey activities for their members as permitted by Alberta Health.

2. **Why is this change coming now?**

Since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, Hockey Edmonton has followed the leadership of our governing bodies, Hockey Canada, Hockey Alberta and Alberta Health and abided by all orders and rules put in place to protect the public health of all Albertans. Alberta Health announced on February 6th an easing of the restrictions for athletes 18 years old and younger for small group training beginning February 8th, we were not aware of this announcement prior to February 6th and are working closely with our partners to safely return our teams to small group training.

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

Yes, both indoor and outdoor training sessions are permitted. All sessions regardless of Indoor or Outdoor must be facilitated with physical distancing measures of 3 metres for indoor activities and 2 metres for outdoor activities. All coaches and trainers must remain masked at all times. Players must remain masked at all times except when participating in the on ice activity.

4. **Can we do individual training sessions?**

The current Government restrictions will permit one-on-one training with coaches and trainers.

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.

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.

7. **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](#).

8. **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



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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.

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

Hockey Edmonton and its member organizations, including Interlock MHA's have indicated that they will extend the current season until April 30, 2021 if facilities permit. Some EFHL associations may be forced to shut down their season depending on ice facilities available to them through their municipality. The majority of EFHL associations are committed to a season extension until April 30, 2021

10. 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.

