



# RINGETTE CANADA'S CHANGE ROOM GUIDELINES & IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

## Purpose

The Ringette Canada Change Room Guidelines are intended to provide general standards and guidance to ensure that all change rooms in ringette are safe, inclusive, and equitable environments for all ringette athletes. Change rooms are team spaces and all members of the team (regardless of their gender identity) should feel comfortable and be able to use these team spaces. However, it is recognized that there may be needs for additional privacy based on a range of reasons (e.g., gender, religion, chronic conditions). These guidelines break down the process by which the needs can be raised, explored, and addressed. While these are general guidelines, they are specifically instrumental in the Trans-Inclusion Policy.

The section on implementation steps, directed towards team officials (coaches and training staff), functions as a practical way to implement the change room guidance.

New concepts and practices require an open mind, time, and patience. It is not about being perfect but being respectful.

## Guiding Principles

While information is provided for different scenarios and needs, it is not possible to anticipate all of them. There may be situations in which leagues need to develop their own tailored solution using an athlete-focused, ethical, and values-based approach to guide them to a common sense and inclusive resolution. In such cases, it is valuable to use the guiding principles outlined on the next page to support decision-making and enhance approaches to accommodation.



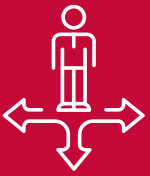


## GUIDING PRINCIPLES



### RESPECT (THROUGH ACTIVE LISTENING)

Everyone should be treated with dignity by taking the time to listen and taking their needs seriously, even if you do not fully understand their needs.



### CHOICE (MORE THAN JUST TWO OPTIONS)

Everyone should be able to make choices from an adequate number of options (i.e., more than two options) to determine the one best for them based on their situation.



### PRIVACY (THEIR STORY TO TELL)

Everyone should have the same ability to protect and keep in confidence their personal information



### SAFETY (AS MEASURED BY BEHAVIOUR)

Everyone has a right to safety (i.e., freedom from physical and/or emotional harm). Safety should be determined based on someone's behaviour, not other identifying characteristics (such as gender).



### INCLUSIVITY (BY REMOVING BARRIERS)

Everyone has a right to participate in ringette. Pursuing accommodations is one way of ensuring inclusivity by removing barriers based on individual needs.



## Rights to Inclusion

All athletes, coaches, officials, staff, volunteers, and parents/guardians of ringette athletes have the right to be respected and to be equal participants of the sport. This means that they have a right to access safe, inclusive and equitable change rooms and washrooms.

Respecting the rights of athletes, coaches, officials, staff, volunteers and the parents/guardians of athletes to inclusion and equal treatment, may need no accommodation at all. However, if an athlete has a particular need, then it is important to try hard to help them.

## Definitions

**Change Room:** A space that is open concept and/or has private booths for changing in and out of athletic gear.

**Shower:** A space available within most change rooms that is either open concept and/or has private booths to allow for showering after athletic activity.

## Guidance

All athletes have a right to access safe, inclusive, and equitable change room spaces. In this regard, all athletes have the right to utilize a change room or appropriate and equivalent change areas that meet their individual needs.

Athletes are responsible for asking for assistance and support to the best of their ability from their team or league if they need accommodation with regard to change rooms. If an athlete requests such an accommodation, they agree to work cooperatively with their team or league to locate appropriate and equivalent change areas when faced with facility limitations.

If due to facility limitations, and despite proactive efforts of the applicable team or league, a change room that meets an athlete's individual needs is unavailable, the applicable team or league, with the support of the provincial ringette association, will work in cooperation with the athlete to find an appropriate and equivalent change room.



When considering options, it is important to note that change rooms are team spaces, which can and do include all genders. There are several considerations between change rooms and showers with different levels of privacy. The table below outlines the approaches to change rooms and showers recommended to promote inclusion on a team and to respect the privacy of all athletes on a team.

## SITUATION

## PROCEDURES

Change room with changing in the open.	It is strongly encouraged that all athletes wear certain “minimum attire” at all times in the change room. This means that athletes should arrive at the rink wearing a base layer (e.g., shorts and t-shirt, compression shorts and shirt or sports bra). An athlete not arriving at the rink wearing their base layer can use an appropriate space (e.g., restroom or empty/unused change room) to change into the base layer and then enter the team change room with the other athletes.
Change room with private changing booths.	Athletes take turns using private stalls to change in and out of athletic gear. Athletes are discouraged from being in a state of undress in the common areas of the change room.
Open concept showers.	It is strongly encouraged that all athletes wear certain “minimum attire” at all times when in open concept showers, including bathing suits and/or trunks.
Showers in private stalls.	Athletes take turns using private stalls to shower after athletic activity. Athletes are discouraged from being in a state of undress in the common areas of the change room.

In some cases, provincial and federal laws could apply to restroom or locker room usage, and programs should consult and apply applicable law(s).

**To ensure that all athletes are treated as valued members of a team, team officials should only engage in pre- and post-game talks when all athletes are present in the change room.**



## Implementation Steps

While the guidance is intended to ensure safe and private use of change rooms and showers for all ringette athletes, some athletes may have specific or additional needs based on their individual circumstances or experiences. The steps that follow are intended to assist coaches and training staff to communicate about and undertake accommodation as part of implementing the change room guidance.

### Informing about Accommodation

Coaches and training staff are encouraged to develop and disseminate the following additions to existing policies and/or procedures, if they are not already addressed. This should be shared with athletes, parents, and guardians before and throughout the season. This allows for greater transparency about and smoother implementation of this change room guidance.

## STEPS

Update and share code of conduct to reflect change room guidance

## TEMPLATE

- Add “minimum attire” in common/open spaces of change rooms and/or showers.
- Add that athletes can ask for accommodation in change rooms based on individual circumstances.
- If accommodation is needed, athletes and/or parents/guardians submit an accommodation request in writing to the team or league. Specify who they should contact.
- Athletes are entitled to a confidential meeting, with date, time, and space relayed in advance to discuss the accommodation request. They can bring a supportive person (parent/guardian or supportive non-relative) to the meeting.
- Accommodations can be requested at any time (not just at the beginning of the season).
- Athletes do not need to disclose why the accommodation is being sought.
- Best efforts will be made to accommodate the athlete, based on possibilities within the venue.
- Every team member is included in pre- and post-game talk in a change room, regardless of whether or not they use the team change room.



## STEPS

Create and share speaking notes for pre-season talk with team and parents/guardians.

## TEMPLATE

- Importance of creating a welcoming and inclusive environment as part of ringette values.
- How use of change rooms is part of creating this environment.
- Review key points of updated code of conduct.
- Explain reasons for changes to approach to change rooms to make it more inclusive and equitable for all players.
- Athletes may have different needs for change rooms for a variety of reasons.
- Encourage athletes to come forward with their needs to address together.
- Where requested, attempts will be made to work with the venue to accommodate them.

### Undertaking Accommodation

If an athlete on your team has requested accommodation assistance with respect to the change rooms, here are the following steps and sample language to address the matter with them. These can be undertaken through meetings and summarized in emails. For meetings, it is important to follow Coaching Association of Canada's [Rule of 2](#) by having two adults present for the conversation. Besides the coach, this could involve the athlete's parent or support person or another trained and screened adult.

Sometimes there is focus on matching the gender of the coach to the requesting athlete; however, this is not always possible with non-binary athletes. As such, athletes should be asked which coach or trained staff they wish to talk to about their requests.



### WHAT IS THE RULE OF TWO?

The goal of the Rule of Two is to ensure all interactions and communications are open, observable and justifiable. Its purpose is to protect participants (especially minors) and coaches in potentially vulnerable situations by ensuring more than one adult is present.



## Summary of Steps for Making Change Room Accommodations

### STEPS

### SAMPLE LANGUAGE

Listen to understand the request for accommodation.

Thank you for coming to me with your need for accommodation in change rooms. We're here to support you with your needs. Can you tell me more about your need and what you have in mind to address it?"

If the athlete does not have ideas, brainstorm options for how to address.

"Here are a few options for how we can handle or address your needs. Are you leaning towards any one or more of these?"

Repeat the request back to ensure full understanding and determine the accommodation's impact.

"If I heard you correctly, you are needing a single-unit shower for greater privacy to change and shower before and after the games. Did I get that right? Will this accommodation allow you to feel safe and be able to participate?"

Repeat the request back to ensure full understanding and determine the accommodation's impact.

**Coach:** "I have an athlete [without disclosing their name] who needs a different change room arrangement. In particular, they would like a single-unit shower for greater privacy. Is that available at this venue?"

**Venue:** "Unfortunately, we only have women's and men's change rooms with communal showers."

**Coach:** "Are there any other private spaces where the athlete can change? Like a referee change room, unassigned change room, multi-purpose room, or staff bathroom?"

**Venue:** "Yes, there is an unused officials change room during that time."

Discuss the outcomes with the athlete seeking accommodation.

**Coach:** "I spoke to the manager of the venue to explore options, especially the availability of single-unit showers. Unfortunately, there aren't any available at this venue. Don't worry, we'll figure this out together."



## STEPS

## SAMPLE LANGUAGE

Explore more options.

**Coach:** “I asked about additional options, including :

- Referee change room
- Unassigned change room
- Multi-purpose room next to the ice rink

The venue has an unused official change room. What, if any, of these work for you? ”

Make a decision.

“Ok, it sounds like we have landed on the following arrangement:

You will use the [insert option selected].

Let me know how that goes for you and if you make any adjustments along the way. We’re here to support you.”

Work with the athlete to decide what other team official(s) may need to be notified of the decision, who will help to secure the changing space.

“What do you think about letting [name of other team official] know about this decision, so they can help with securing the change space each week?”

Summarize in emails.

Send an email to the athlete and/or the parents/guardians based on the outcomes of your discussions.

Send an email to the venue about the outcomes of your discussions with the athlete.

**Knowing the reason behind an accommodation request is not necessary for providing accommodations and respect. It is up to the athlete’s discretion as to whether or not they choose to disclose why they require the accommodation.**

Athletes, who are minors, can make requests for accommodation independent of their parents or guardians without their involvement or approval.





Keep in mind that unfounded concerns about safety are sometimes used to attempt to justify discriminatory treatment relating to gender identity and gender expression. For example, trans women and girls are routinely discriminated against by being excluded from female-designated dressing rooms, washrooms and other gender-segregated spaces based on the false and biased assumption that they represent a safety threat. In such a case, the bias must be addressed and the person's right to access must not be impeded based on this bias.

## **Types of Requests**

While it is not possible to anticipate all the types of requests for additional privacy that coaches may receive from their athletes, here are a few common ones to be prepared to address:

- Religious reasons.
- Chronic conditions.
- Athlete whose gender is the same as the team needs a separate change space due to showers being open concept (including for reasons related to being transgender, having a disability, and/or body image issues).
- Athlete whose gender is different from the team needs a separate change even though the team space is intended for all genders, they may be uncomfortable due to the majority of athletes in the space being a different gender.

## **Types of Options**

It is not possible to imagine all the types of solutions for addressing accommodation requests. Athletes should not be pressured into any of the following solutions. It is important that you work with them so they feel comfortable and they are an active part of decision-making. Here are some common options for greater privacy:

- All-gender or family change room with fully-enclosed stalls;
- Referee change rooms;
- Extra unassigned change rooms;
- Meeting or multi-purpose rooms near the ice rink; and
- Staff washroom near the ice rink.