

NGHA 2021-22 COVID-19 Protocols

This protocol is mandatory for all NGHA teams, and will be updated throughout the season as and when required. Most recent revisions are highlighted.

Proof of COVID-19 Vaccination

As of March 1, 2022, the following changes to public health and workplace safety measures are in effect:

- Capacity limits have been lifted in all indoor public settings.
- Proof of vaccination requirements have been lifted:
 - Businesses and organizations may choose to require proof of vaccination upon entry.
- Other protective measures such as mask/face covering requirements and passive screening of patrons remain in place.

For the full list of measures in effect, see [O. Reg. 364/20](#).

For our ice vendors:

- **Sensplex facilities** have lifted the proof of vaccination requirements, eliminated the requirement for Sensplex staff to screen patrons upon entry to each facility, and removed all capacity limits.
- **City of Ottawa facilities** no longer require contract holders to confirm proof of vaccination.
- **Carleton University** will continue to use the [cuScreen System](#) and require all proof of full COVID-19 vaccination for all community members 12 years of age and older to enter Carleton University Recreation and Athletics facilities. As of March 14, 2022, proof of full vaccination will be also required for children aged 5-11.

The Ontario Women's Hockey Association (OWHA), our governing body, [has issued](#) regulations and guidance on Proof of Vaccination requirements for recreational activities.

It is mandatory, as a condition of eligibility to participate in any OWHA-sanctioned activity, that everyone born in 2009 and earlier must be fully vaccinated (2 shots plus 14 days) as soon as possible and by no later than **November 1st, 2021**. This includes all players, staff and volunteers, including coaches, trainers and officials. The only exemption from this requirement is for two specific medical reasons.

Definition of Fully Vaccinated

An individual is considered fully vaccinated if they have received:

- The full series of a COVID-19 vaccine authorized by Health Canada, or any combination of such vaccines, or
- One or two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine not authorized by Health Canada, followed by one dose of a COVID-19 mRNA vaccine authorized by Health Canada, or

- Three doses of a COVID-19 vaccine not authorized by Health Canada; and
- They received their final dose of the COVID-19 vaccine at least 14 days before providing the proof of being fully vaccinated.

Medical Exemption

Proof of vaccination does not apply to participants who provide a written document, completed and supplied by a physician (designated as “MD”) or by a registered nurse in the extended class (designated as “Registered Nurse (Extended Class)”, “RN(EC)”, “Nurse Practitioner” or “NP”) stating that the individual is exempt for a medical reason from being fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and the effective time-period for the medical reason. Patrons with a medical exemption are required to present identification and a written document stating the individual is exempt for a medical reason to the business or organization.

Individuals who have a valid medical exemption should contact nghapolicy@gmail.com

1) Designated Team Official

Each team must have a Designated Team Official who will be accountable for ensuring team compliance with the NGHHA COVID-19 protocol, arena rules and regulations and public health advice.

This Designated Team Official will need additional help to handle the logistics of arrivals/departures at facilities, and will work closely with the team’s Coach to implement the required protocols for suspected or confirmed COVID-19 illness.

The Designated Team Official will be designated by the Head Coach, and will usually be the team trainer. However, this person should have a back-up and will require additional volunteers, including a Team Safety Officer(s) (see below)

2) Team Safety Officer

Each team must also have a Team Safety Officer for each ice time. This person / persons will be responsible for completing specific duties at the facility, including:

- Taking attendance and ensuring completion of COVID-19 health/screening assessments by all players and volunteers entering the facility using the Teamsnap Application;
- Ensuring compliance with facility rules, including maximum number of individuals in the facility if and where applicable; and
- Liaising with facility staff.

3) COVID-19 Screening and Proof of Vaccination At Rink

Each player and team volunteer must be screened/assessed for COVID-19 symptoms before entering the facility.

TeamSnap: All teams will be provided with a paid TeamSnap Account. Players, team staff and Den Moms are required to complete a COVID-19 screening using their TeamSnap account prior to all practices, games and team activities.

The Team Safety Officer must ensure that all players and team volunteers have been screened before entering the building. If a player or staff member has not completed all required self-assessments, they cannot enter the facility until they are completed.

Note 1: In addition to completing the screening questionnaire on TeamSnap, Carleton University requires proof of full COVID-19 vaccination for all community members 12 years of age and older to enter Carleton University Recreation and Athletics facilities, including the Carleton Ice House, using the [cuScreen system](#). Setting up your [cuScreen guest/visitors account](#) can take approximately 15-20 minutes and you cannot enter/access the facilities without verifying your vaccination status and screening through cuScreen.

Visitors under the age of 12 who are not yet fully vaccinated must complete the [Carleton Ice House pre-screening form](#). **Please be advised that Carleton University will be requiring proof of full vaccination for children aged 5 to 11 commencing March 14, 2022.**

The Team Safety Officer will also validate attendance for that ice session, which must be retained in Teamsnap for 30 days.

Home Games Against Non-NGHA Teams

It is mandatory for NGHA teams to ensure screening is done for all practices, games and other team activities. In addition, when the NGHA is hosting other non-NGHA teams on its ice, the home team must make arrangements with the other team to ensure that the other team completes these requirements for its team.

In summary, the Team Safety officer is required to:

- ✓ Review the facility requirements on the NGHA website to be familiar with the specific procedures;
- ✓ Remind all players and team staff to complete their COVID-19 screening assessment prior to coming to the rink;

- ✓ Meet all players and team staff at the entrance of the facility to confirm their COVID-19 screening is complete;
- ✓ If you are hosting a non-NGHA team on NGHA ice, ensure that the other team has procedures in place to screen all of its players and team staff.

Protocols to address player illness are outlined later in this document.

4) Permitted # of Players, Staff and Spectators

Note: These requirements are subject to changes per our ice suppliers.

Players, Staff and Spectators:

	City of Ottawa	Bell Sensplex	Carleton University
On-Ice/Staff	There are no restrictions on team sports. Physical contact, size of teams, cohorts or any other game play scenarios can resume.	The Sensplex no longer limits the capacity of the number of individuals associated with a given rental, activity, event, or other occasion with their facilities.	A maximum of 60 attendees will be permitted per group, including players, coaches, officials and timekeepers.
In Change Rooms	No dressing room capacity limits.	No dressing room capacity limits.	Two dressing rooms will be available for each rental group with a maximum capacity of 9 per room . Additional chairs will be available in a common area for your group.
Spectators	February 17, 2022 – In keeping with updates to provincial regulations, recreation facilities will return to full capacities where staffing levels permit. Food and drink are allowed in arenas, individuals must remain seated when consuming.	No capacity limit for spectators. Participants and spectators may enter/exit the facility at any time.	100 spectators will be permitted in Arena A, and 50 spectators will be permitted in Arena B. Spectators must wear masks and maintain physical distance of 2m.

Note: It is the obligations of teams to ensure that all individuals attending an ice session (players and team staff) are properly screened.

Teams are required to ensure that they comply with capacity limitations set out above for practices and games. Failure to do so may result in the NGHA forfeiting its ability to use that facility for the rest of the season.

5) Masks, Physical Distancing and Hand Hygiene

On March 21, 2022, the Province of Ontario is removing its mandatory mask requirement for many indoor settings including indoor recreational facilities. Players, team staff, volunteers and spectators are no longer required to wear mask, but those who prefer to are welcome to do so.

Players and staff **should** sanitize their hands upon entry and exit of the facility.

Absolutely no spitting is permitted. Parents, coaches and trainers are required to address this behavior if observed.

6) Hockey Equipment

Players should wash equipment frequently.

Sharing of equipment, including jerseys is prohibited. The only exception tryout pinneys and quick-change goalie equipment. Instructions to coaches on these exceptions will be provided separately.

7) Change Rooms and Den Moms

Use of dressing rooms is permitted in accordance with facility rules and regulations.

It is important to note that facilities are limiting the number of players in a dressing room, and are assigning two (or more) rooms to each team to ensure physical distancing. Most arenas also have additional seating outside of dressing rooms. Teams can use these to improve social distancing (players must be appropriately dressed outside of change rooms).

Den Moms are required in change rooms in accordance with the NGHA Dressing Room Policy (<https://gowildcats.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/NGHA-Dressing-Room-Policy-March-2021.pdf>).

Only players and female team staff are permitted in the change rooms until 10 minutes before the beginning of practice, at which time coaches may enter to assist with skate tying. The only exception is the Fundamentals and U9 (Novice), where parents are permitted in the change room.

8) Movement of Players, Coaches and Trainers Between Teams

Player and staff movement between teams is permitted in accordance with the NGHA affiliation policy.

9) Dryland Training & Other External Training

Team dryland training:

- Is absolutely not permitted inside any of our ice facilities at any time (additionally, teams must not arrive more than 30min in advance of their scheduled ice time);
- Cannot be scheduled as a mandatory activity;
- Must not be paid for using team fees; and,
- Is only permitted under the following circumstances:
 - i. Indoor dryland training is run by a third party at an insured training facility;
 - ii. Coaches and volunteers are responsible for ensuring all players and team staff follow the COVID-19 protocol as set out in this document and local public health measures including physical distancing and wearing masks during any dryland training sessions;
 - iii. Players who opt out of dryland training sessions must not be penalized in any way.

10) Car Pooling and Social Gatherings

Car-pooling is strongly discouraged given the inability to maintain social distancing.

In-person social gatherings (e.g. team ice breakers, fundraisers, coach-parent meetings) are permitted in accordance with local public health regulations.

Indoor activities/gatherings need to follow public health guidelines for hosting indoor events in place at the time of the activity.

Teams should endeavour to keep these to outdoor settings as much as possible.

11) Water bottles

Water bottles are permitted but must be clearly labelled. Players must bring their own water to the rink, and bottles shall not be stored in water bottle trays. Water must not be shared between players.

12) Personal Protective Equipment

Team trainers are encouraged to have hand sanitizer, extra masks and gloves on hand in their supplies. These supplies should be purchased through the team budget.

13) Player Absences

In the current COVID-19 environment, there are a variety of legitimate reasons a player may have to miss a practice or series of practices. These can include school obligations, illness, and COVID-19-related self-isolation requirements to protect others. Parents are encouraged to discuss these absences with their Coach, and Coaches have been instructed to provide full flexibility where there is a legitimate reason for a player to be absent.

14) Mandatory Training For All Team Staff

All team staff that play a role in player safety are required to complete the mandatory OSHA COVID-19 on-line training (“HU Planning a Safe Return to Hockey”) when it is available. The Head of Certification will advise teams of this training at a later date.

15) Illnesses

There are a number of illness-related scenarios that will need to be managed on a case-by-case basis. The main principle is “If sick, stay home”. However, there are a range of scenarios that teams may face during the season. If there are questions, teams can contact the NGHA at nghapolicy@gmail.com.

a) What if a player doesn’t pass the TeamSnap Health Check?

If a player or staff completes and does not pass the Teamsnap self-assessment, they cannot attend the team activity. They should complete the Government of Ontario self-assessment tool and follow the instructions provided: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/>

b) What if a player arrives at the rink and is exhibiting symptoms?

If a team official observes a player with COVID-19 symptoms, the Head Coach is authorized to prohibit the player from entering the facility and participating in an ice session. The parents/guardian should be encouraged to use the Government of Ontario on-line screening tool to determine next steps.

c) What should I do if a player or staff member goes for COVID-19 testing?

The NGHA is encouraging NGHA families to communicate with their Coach and Designated Team Official if a player or staff member is being tested for COVID-19.

Teams are obligated to respect player privacy. However, depending on the situation (e.g. illness the day after the practice), with the family's consent, team officials may choose to advise other families on the team that a player (who will not be identified) is being tested, so that families can self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms and take appropriate steps if necessary. The family would then notify the Coach and Designated Team Official when the results are received, so that team families can be informed of the outcome (see d. for more on positive tests).

If a player is undergoing COVID-19 testing, teams should consult with the NGHA to determine if upcoming practices should be suspended pending the results.

d) What if a player or staff member tests positive for COVID-19

If a person tests positive for COVID-19, they must follow [OPH guidance](#).

The NGHA is also encouraging families to be share positive test results with their Head Coach and Designated Team Official. As noted, player privacy will be fully respected. However, teams are encouraged to inform families that an individual (who will not be identified) has tested positive so that families can self-monitor and seek medical advice if appropriate.

e) My daughter has COVID-19 symptoms but has been fully vaccinated. I think it is just a cold. Can she participate in team activities?

If a player has COVID-19 symptoms, they cannot attend team activities. They should complete the Government of Ontario self-assessment tool and follow the instructions provided: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/>

16) Other OWHA Restrictions

The following activities are **not permitted** at this time, until further notice:

- Travel Outside Ontario
- Participation with teams from outside Ontario
- Overnight Camps and Activities
- Bus transportation

17) I have a medical exemption from the proof-of-vaccination requirements. What do I do?

The Following requirements are set out in the Government of Ontario for seeking an exemption from the proof-of-vaccination requirement:

Patrons who provide a written document, completed and supplied by a physician (designated as "MD") or by a registered nurse in the extended class (designated as "Registered Nurse

(Extended Class)", "RN(EC)", "Nurse Practitioner" or "NP") stating that the individual is exempt for a medical reason from being fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and the effective time-period for the medical reason.

Patrons with a medical exemption are required to present identification and a written document stating the individual is exempt for a medical reason to the business or organization.

To review proof of a medical reason for not being vaccinated against COVID-19, the business or organization must ensure:

- The name of the person in the written documentation matches the identification provided.
- The physician's or registered nurse in the extended class's information is complete by including:
 - Name and contact information of the physician or registered nurse in the extended class;
 - Logo or letterhead identifying the physician or registered nurse in the extended class;
 - Statement that there is a medical reason for the individual's exemption from being fully vaccinated against COVID-19; and
 - Any effective time-period for the medical reason which includes the date the patron is seeking access to the business or organization

Players or Volunteers who have documentation for a medical exemption should contact nghapolicy@gmail.com .

18) If you have received a letter from OPH.

If you have been told to stay home from school, or told that you must wear a mask, practice physical distancing, and/or avoid non-essential activities until a specific date, you should stay home from hockey. **Generally speaking, if you can't go to school, you can't go to hockey,** however if you are unsure please contact NGHApolicy@gmail.com with a copy of the letter.