

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

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

Effective immediately, 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.

Spectators

An important aspect of these regulations pertains to spectators. All spectators who are eligible to be vaccinated (born in 2009 or earlier) must have proof of vaccination. If a spectator who is eligible to be vaccinated cannot produce Proof of Vaccination, they may be

prevented from entering the arena or asked to leave the facility. They may also be subject to fines under the provincial regulations.

Next Steps

Coaches must:

- Inform their appropriate Competitive or House League Program Director if they will not meet this requirement by the deadline; and
- Identify any staff or team volunteers who cannot meet the requirement and make alternate arrangements as these individuals will not be able to enter the arenas until they meet the fully vaccinated requirements set out above.
- Submit their proof of vaccination to: <https://gowildcats.ca/resources/vaccination/>

Players born in 2009 and earlier must:

- Submit their proof of vaccination to: <https://gowildcats.ca/resources/vaccination/>

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

<https://cloud.rampinteractive.com/whaontario/files/Bulletins/FINAL%20-%20COVID%2019%20Update%20%28Sept%2027%202021%29.pdf>

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, volunteers and spectators entering the facility using the Teamsnap Application or Government of Ontario screening tool (see section 3);
- Ensuring all spectators aged 12 and over provide proof of vaccination before entering the facility;
- Ensuring compliance with facility rules, including maximum number of individuals in the facility; and
- Liaising with facility staff.

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

Each player, team volunteer and all spectators must be screened/assessed for COVID-19 symptoms, and those who are aged 12 and over must provide proof of vaccination, 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.

Ontario On-line Screening Tool: All spectators must also be screened using the Government of Ontario on-line Screening Tool (<https://covid-19.ontario.ca/screening/customer/>). Due to capacity limits on the NGHA TeamSnap licence, spectators cannot be screened using the team's Teamsnap account unless they are a member of the team staff or a Den Mom.

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

Note 1: for **Carleton University**, players, staff members and spectators must complete the on-line Carleton University screening <https://forms.office.com/r/Kgszf1rWE6> or cuScreen. This is in addition to completing the screening questionnaire on Teamsnap.

The Team Safety Officer will also validate attendance for that ice session, which must be retained in Teamsnap for 30 days. These records are required so that Ottawa Public Health can conduct contact tracing in the event of a confirmed COVID case. The Designated Team Official must also have easily accessible contact information for each team member (players, staff and spectators), including name and telephone number.

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, including the vaccination requirement.

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, staff and spectators to complete their COVID-19 screening assessment prior to coming to the rink;
- ✓ Meet all players, staff and spectators at the entrance of the facility to confirm their COVID-19 screening is complete;
- ✓ Ensure that all screening and attendance information is kept for 30 days;
- ✓ 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, staff and spectators, and ensure the vaccination requirement is fulfilled for anyone aged 12 and over.

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

4) Permitted # of Players and Staff

Note: These requirements are currently under review with our ice suppliers.

Players and Staff:

	City of Ottawa	Bell Sensplex	Carleton University
On-Ice at one time	80 on ice at one time	32 participants total. This including	60 total on-ice participants
Bench Staff / Time keeper	5 per bench per team + 2 timekeepers*	players, coaches, trainers, timekeepers and referees.	5 per bench per team + 2 timekeepers*
In Change Rooms	Per Facility Instructions	Per Facility Instructions	16 with distancing

*NGHA requirement

Note: It is the obligations of teams to ensure that all individuals attending an ice session (players, volunteers and spectators) are properly screened and provide proof of vaccination.

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

All players and staff must wear masks at all time, except when on the ice or transiting to and from the dressing room to the ice. Players and staff must wear their masks into the arena. Masks must be worn in the dressing room at all times, except when the player or coach is leaving the dressing room for the ice. Mask must be put back on when the helmet is removed in the dressing room at the end of practice.

Coaches and trainers must wear masks on the bench.

Timekeepers must wear masks at all times.

Players and staff must 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 changerooms).

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. Host teams are required to complete COVID-19 screening for these players and track their attendance and screening information in Teamsnap.

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.

Note: all COVID-19 screening requirements set out in Section 4 must be implemented for team-sanctioned gatherings.

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 OWSA 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

Ottawa Public Health (OPH) will take a lead role if a person tests positive for COVID-19. OPH will provide direction to the family, and may reach out to the NGHA to conduct contact tracing if necessary.

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
- Hockey Games – tentative start date is September 1/21, based on health and safety approvals
- League Play – tentative start date is October 2021 and based on health and safety approvals
- Tournaments – tentative start date is October 1/21 based on health and safety approvals
- Overnight Camps and Activities
- Bus transportation

17) I am a parent that does not meet the mandatory vaccination requirement and cannot accompany my player into the facility. What do I do?

The NGHA, including its coaches and team volunteers, is not responsible for unaccompanied players. If you are unable to accompany your player into the facility, it is your responsibility to

make arrangements with another trusted adult who is fully vaccinated (i.e. grandparent, another parent on your team, etc) who is willing to accompany your player into, and out of, the facility.

18) 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 .

19) 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.