



New Sarepta Minor Hockey Association

Return to Play Guidelines for NSMHA

1. Philosophy/ Mission

NSMHA's hockey program will always be based upon the following values: Integrity, Safety, Enjoyment, Consistency, Respect, and Teamwork. As such, during this COVID-19 pandemic, NSMHA is aiming for a safe reintegration of children into our hockey programs, supporting their physical, emotional, social, and mental health.

2. Purpose/ Objective

NSMHA's goal is to continue offering high quality, organized and supervised programs with the priority of a safe and healthy environment for the children, families, and arena staff. By adhering to the guidelines established by both the Provincial and National hockey bodies, and our Ag Society, we believe that our facility can be a safe environment for athletes, their fans, and the arena staff. Our objective is to commit to operating our programs in a safe standard in accordance with the restrictions set forth in this document with an adherence to physical distancing and the risk reduction recommendations set forth herein and in accordance with Alberta Health Services and the aforementioned guidance with amendments from time to time. We encourage members to revisit this document regularly and frequently for updates.

Many families want their children re-engaged in sports and are concerned with the long-term consequences of continued isolation and restrictions. Health and Safety have been at the forefront for NSMHA's Executive as they have been planning what a return to hockey will look like. This plan relies heavily on the honesty and integrity of 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, and Hockey Alberta. We encourage all participants to review the Hockey Alberta Return to Play Hockey Plan, specifically relating to Roles and Responsibilities.

3. Procedures and Protocols

Association Responsibilities:

- Following are the proposed requirements of NSMHA as Facility User in these Modified Sports Program Rules:

- To communicate to all participants regularly about the risk of COVID-19 and procedures that should be taken to mitigate risk. This will be done through the Safety person on each team
- To communicate the process of COVID-19 check-in and tracing to all participants as outlined in this document
- To maintain contact tracing history as outlined by Hockey Alberta
- To liaise with Hockey Alberta, Hockey Canada, and Alberta Health Services with the priority of player and community safety should the need arise.

Responsibilities of Coaches, or Safety Person:

Prior to each training session:

- All participants are expected to review the Arena Guidelines as they pertain to arrival times, dressing rooms, facility access, spectator recommendations, hygiene, and capacity.
- Remind athletes and their families of social distancing guidelines; the need to label all equipment; ensure all water bottles are filled at home and properly labeled with the players' name so that they are easily identified. At no point will any personal equipment, including water bottles, be shared between players.
- Remind players and families of gathering restrictions both on ice, in the arena, and the parking lot
- Players will have access to the change rooms 30 minutes before and 30 minutes after each session
- All coaches and players will wear masks while in the facility and maintain appropriate physical distance of 2m from one another
- Only coaches and players are to be in the dressing room. No siblings.
- Players shall not move around the facility. They are to stay at their
- assigned location
- Players and coaches are to remain seated in their change rooms waiting for the Zamboni to leave the ice and close the doors. There is to be no gathering on the players benches.

During the training session:

- Coaches will:
 - *Ensure that instructional "board time" is minimized and done in a physically distanced manner
 - *Ensure players do not remove gloves to touch or pick up pucks
 - *Ensure players do not participate in close contact celebrations
 - Masks (PPE) must be worn at all times when looking after an injured player. Do not use PPE to allow participants to break social distancing rules during the sessions
 - Remind athletes to refrain from touching their faces during activities
- Absolutely no spitting or clearing of nasal passages at ANY time**

After the training sessions:

- Coaches/Managers should ensure that players leave the facility within 30 minutes following the end of their session
- Ensure athletes have retrieved all their personal equipment (water bottles, etc.)
- Do not touch another participants equipment unless you are in the same household
- Ensure athletes and coaches wash or sanitize their hands again
- No post training meeting communications on the ice, in the arena or in the parking lot. Please communicate virtually using email, text, TeamSnap or another electronic communication

NSMHA encourages all players to have their own hand sanitizer in their hockey bag

Spectator Responsibilities:

Spectators of NSMHA and Hockey Alberta sanctioned events must maintain physical distancing with people who are not from the same household. All masks are mandatory in the bleachers.

- Try to minimize contact with high touch surfaces.
- DO NOT drink from the water fountain. The fountain can be used to fill cups or water bottles.
- As per Ag guidelines, spectators will not be allowed to stand along side the boards. They must be seated in the bleachers. The bleachers will be marked to manage physical distancing.
- No yelling or cheering as this increases the risk of droplet transfer.
- No spitting
- Avoid touching your face
- Wash your hands frequently and/or use hand sanitizer often
- Wipe frequently touched surfaces including cell phones, tablets, etc.

4. Player Safety/Health

COVID Check-In:

- Prior to the start of a program (for example, first ice session), the organizer will distribute or ask the Alberta Health Daily Checklist to all participants. If a participant can answer YES to any of the questions, they are not to attend.
- During each day of a program, the Safety Coordinator will be required to record the names of all participants in each Cohort to assist AHS should an individual test positive for COVID-19 and contact tracing is necessary.
- Rosters are to be kept for each event/activity so there is a record of which individuals were present.

Symptoms:

If you have any of these symptoms you are legally required to isolate for 10 days from the start of your symptoms or until they resolve, whichever is longer.

- Fever
- Cough (new cough or worsening chronic cough)
- Shortness of breath
- Runny nose
- Sore throat

If you have any of these other symptoms, stay home and minimize your contact with others until your symptoms resolve.

- Chills
- Painful swallowing
- Stuffy nose
- Headache
- Muscle or joint aches
- Feeling unwell, fatigue or severe exhaustion
- Gastrointestinal symptoms (nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or unexplained loss of appetite)
- Loss of sense of smell or taste
- Conjunctivitis, commonly known as pink eye

If a participant, coaching staff or spectator becomes sick while participating, the following requirements apply:

- While preparing to immediately leave the facility, symptomatic individuals should perform proper hand hygiene, put on a non-medical face mask, and maintain at least 2 metres distance from all others.
- The individual should arrange, with assistance from team officials or the facility as necessary, for immediate transportation to their home/residence to begin isolation. Public transportation like buses, taxis or ride sharing should be avoided.
- Once a sick individual has left the facility or event, facility staff should clean and disinfect all surfaces and areas with which the individual may have come into contact.

Provided this guidance is being followed, there is no need to cancel an activity, or postpone the undertaking of a cohort group, in the event that an individual becomes sick. Team officials should immediately consider and record the names of all participants in which the sick individual has been in contact. This information may be necessary to assist public health officials if the sick individual later tests positive for COVID-19.

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 representatives 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 a 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.

General Guidelines:

Please follow the current measures as outlined in the COVID-19 Info for Albertans website, as well as the following:

- Staggered approach to the site e.g. physical distancing of 2 meters
- Avoiding touching common surfaces while in public
- 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, and after handling equipment
- Help each other with helpful reminders, this is new to everyone.

Practice/Training Protocols:

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 practice:

- All participants will wash their hands before arrival
- All participants will use hand sanitizer at the beginning of all events, before touching any personal items, and prior to leaving the session
- All participants are required to avoid person to person contact
- Coaches will coach from a safe distance at least 2 meters from athletes
- Nonessential activities that require close contact between individuals will not be permitted
- No sharing of sticks, gloves, water bottles, or any other personal equipment
- NO SPITTING
- Participants will avoid touching their face
- Player equipment and clothing must be cleaned with disinfectant where appropriate and/or washed often
- No unnecessary physical contact e.g. high fives
- Safety Person for each team may request the support of a parent to help with ensuring guidelines are being followed throughout the session

All participants will be expected to follow the guidelines put in place by our Ag Society in accordance to AHS

5. 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 meters apart. A person in a cohort should have little to no close contact with people outside of the cohort. Keeping the same people together, rather than mixing and mingling, helps reduce the chance of getting sick and makes it easier to track exposure if someone gets sick.

Under stage 2, cohort types and sizes:

- Core cohorts (families and households) – up to 15 people
- Childcare programs – up to 30 children and staff
- Sports teams – up to 50 players and coaching staff
- Performing groups – up to 50 cast members or performers

It is recommended that you only belong to one core cohort. It is safest to limit the number of other cohorts you belong to reducing the risk of getting sick or spreading COVID-19.

Sport Team Specifics:

With modifications, team sports are permitted under stage 2, including contact sports. Sports teams can play in region-only cohort groups of up to 50 players or “mini leagues”. If participating in, or organizing, a sports activity as part of a cohort group:

- Avoid travel outside of regions
- Tournaments and large events are prohibited
- Clean shared equipment regularly
- Maintain physical distancing when not in play (for example, players on the bench)
- Decrease use of shared locker rooms

NSMHA Executive will be do check-ins during training activities to ensure that all Return to Play Rules and Procedures are followed by each individual group. NSMHA and the Safety person for each team are here in an educational and informational capacity. We simply ask all participants and their families to abide by the guidelines set out by NSMHA and the Ag Society in accordance with AHS and Hockey Alberta.