



**ALBERTA**

**UPDATED**

**AUGUST 21, 2020**



**RETURN TO HOCKEY**



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# 1 INTRODUCTION

Hockey Alberta has worked with Hockey Canada and other provincial branches, Government of Alberta, Provincial Sport Organizations, and our Members, staff and volunteers to develop Alberta's Return to Hockey Plan. The purpose of the Return to Hockey plan is to provide options for a restart to hockey in Alberta, to outline required safety protocols and requirements, and to assist our Members with tasks they need to be undertaking for hockey to re-start.

## ***The Return to Hockey Plan is current as of August 21, 2020.***

It meets the current health and safety requirements of the Government of Alberta and aligns with Hockey Canada's Return to Hockey Safety Guidelines in focusing on the safety and wellbeing of all participants. Updated versions of the Plan will be published and posted to the [Hockey Alberta website](#) based on changes to the Government of Alberta's Relaunch Plan.

All timelines within this plan are subject to change based on Hockey Alberta's evaluation of environmental factors and Government of Alberta restrictions.

The information in this document is not a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. The knowledge and circumstances around COVID-19 are changing constantly and Hockey Alberta recommends that the [Government of Alberta COVID-19 site](#) be accessed for the most up to date information.

## WHAT HAS BEEN UPDATED?

Based on feedback from our Member organizations and updated information from the Government of Alberta, the following updates are included in the **AUGUST 21 VERSION** of the Return to Hockey Plan:

1. A new component has been added to the plan: Modified Competition Season. This can be found in Section 6. The goal is to provide associations/ teams with an opportunity to finalize any tryouts/ evaluations, register rosters and prepare for an eventual return to the Regular Season, when permitted.
2. Clarification of the types of competition allowed during the Development Season component in Section 6.
3. Updated information on certification requirements, clinics and registration for Officials has been included in Section 5. Clarification that on-ice officials are not required until the new Modified Competition Season.
4. Updated information on certification requirements, clinics and registration for Coaches has been included in Section 5.
5. An updated Contact Tracing document has been included in Section 2.
6. Updated requirements regarding the wearing of masks in Section 2.
7. Updated requirements regarding Refunds in Section 2.
8. Recommendation to include a **force majeure clause** in any future contracts that you negotiate.
9. Addition of the current Return to Hockey FAQ document to Section 3.



## WHO TO CONTACT?

Hockey Alberta will be undertaking member engagement strategies to help support member organizations as they prepare for the implementation of each Return to Hockey component.

Specific questions can be directed to appropriate Hockey Alberta senior management based on topic:

- General – Drew Dixon ([ddixon@hockeyalberta.ca](mailto:ddixon@hockeyalberta.ca))
- On-Ice Session Planning – Justin Fesyk ([jfesyk@hockeyalberta.ca](mailto:jfesyk@hockeyalberta.ca))
- Safety Guidelines and Facilities – Mike Klass ([mklass@hockeyalberta.ca](mailto:mklass@hockeyalberta.ca))
- Sanctioning and Registration – Kevin Macrae ([kmacrae@hockeyalberta.ca](mailto:kmacrae@hockeyalberta.ca))
- Member Messaging – Brad Lyon ([blyon@hockeyalberta.ca](mailto:blyon@hockeyalberta.ca))



## 2 PROTOCOLS AND SAFETY IN THE GAME

Hockey Canada, Hockey Alberta and its 13 Member Branches have built a comprehensive Safety Guidelines document, along with an FAQ document, to provide direction and support as organizations (administrators, coaches, managers, safety staff, trainers), parents and players prepare to return to hockey. The information included in these documents should be reviewed regularly, as it provides a solid framework to follow for any organization (and its members) as Return to Hockey planning is undertaken.

[See Appendix 1 – Hockey Canada Safety Guidelines.](#)

[See Appendix 2 – Hockey Canada Safety Guidelines FAQ.](#)

The Safety Guidelines provide guidance on a safe and positive return to hockey experience for our participants and stakeholders. Sections include:

- Insurance Coverage.
- Hygiene Requirements and Checklist.
- Recommended Return to Hockey Procedures.
- What to do if there is a positive COVID-19 test.
- Junior Hockey guidelines.
- Guidelines for Officials.

Hockey Alberta's Members and sanctioned partners are to ensure they do the following:

- follow the Government of Alberta's COVID-19 Public Health guidelines.
- comply with Hockey Alberta's Return to Hockey information.
- comply with all requirements in agreements with arenas/ recreational facilities.
- communicate with their members the safety protocols and Return to Hockey approach that have been approved in Alberta, and for the organization.

### **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 all Hockey Alberta sanctioned activity it is recommended that coaches, team 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).

When participating via Cohorting:

- Players and team 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.

When participating via Physical Distancing:

- Players and team officials must maintain two-metre physical distancing, 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.
- Team officials are to wear masks while on the bench but can remove them while coaching/ instructing on the ice.





## SCREENING/ CONTACT TRACING/ SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

Members and sanctioned partners must screen and track all participants and interactions, maintaining records in a secure location for a minimum of 14 days from completion of activity. This is to be done as part of a daily check-in procedure for participants. Options for recording information include using Hockey Alberta's Contact Tracing document (**Appendix 3 - UPDATED**), or an online tracing application (such as TeamSnap or similar platform).

## REFUNDS

During the Off-Season Skill Development component a pro-rated refund should be offered to any symptomatic participant. During the Development Season, Modified Transition Season, and Regular Season, you may follow your organization's normal refund policy.

[See Appendix 3](#) – *Hockey Alberta Contact Tracing Template (UPDATED)*

[See Appendix 4](#) – *Reporting a Positive COVID-19 Case*

## PARENTS AND PLAYERS

Parents and players play key roles in the Return to Hockey. Their responsibilities include:

- stay at home if experiencing any symptoms.
- become educated on the safety protocols and procedures prior to attending session, and adhere to them while at the session.
- ensure each player has his/her own water bottle which is sanitized prior to each session, and his/her own hand sanitizer for use while on the ice.
- ensure equipment is dried, cleaned and/or sanitized following each session.
- arrange appropriate transportation to and from the session.
- refrain from cheering and yelling as it presents a high risk of spreading droplets.
- do not spit, blow nose freely or release any bodily fluid anywhere in any facility due to an extremely high risk of virus transfer.

A detailed outline of responsibilities of Administrators, Coaches and Managers, Safety Person and Trainer, Players and Parents can be found in the Hockey Canada Safety Guidelines – Roles and Responsibilities (Appendix 5).

[See Appendix 5](#) – *Roles and Responsibilities.*



## 3 COMMUNICATIONS

It is crucial for Hockey Alberta and our Members to communicate with our respective audiences on the details of the Return to Hockey Plan and the programming planned by each organization. Returning and potential new participants want to know what programming is available from their local MHA or team, and that it is aligned with planning by Hockey Alberta and Hockey Canada. It is also important to ensure that the entire hockey community understands that the safety of all participants is paramount to Hockey Alberta and our Members.

Hockey Alberta is committed to providing regular updates to our Members. Our Return to Hockey Plan and its appendices, Bulletins and Memoranda pertaining to COVID-19, and other related materials will be housed on the [Hockey Alberta website](#) on a special Return to Hockey page.

We encourage our Members to engage in regular and open communication with your members as a key part of returning safely to the rink. Members should have a designated page on their website for information related to your program plans. That page should include a link to the Hockey Alberta Return to Hockey page.

It is recommended that each organization identify a communications person who is responsible to update and circulate all relevant information to everyone within their jurisdiction.

Responsibilities can include:

- Monitoring all relevant updates from the Government of Alberta and Alberta Health.
- Monitoring all relevant updates from Hockey Alberta.
- Communicating with your local facilities on guidelines and updates.
- Ensuring teams are following the prevention guidelines set by the Member/hockey association/league.
- Meeting with their Members on a regular basis to assist in facilitating updates.

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

A new Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section has been developed to address the questions that have been asked by Hockey Alberta Members. The questions and answers can be found in Appendix 6 – FAQ. As additional questions are included, the FAQ document will be updated at the Return to Hockey page on the Hockey Alberta website, <https://www.hockeyalberta.ca/members/return-hockey/>.

***[See Appendix 6 – Hockey Alberta Member FAQ – NEW](#)***



## 4 FACILITIES AND SPECTATORS

Hockey Alberta Members and arena facilities must work together to ensure everyone complies with public health guidelines, and that facility users are prepared for the processes and procedures in place at the facilities they use. All Hockey Alberta Members are reminded to engage in positive and open communication with their facilities in planning a safe return to the rink.

Facilities will adopt the standards required by the Government of Alberta, and update and adapt to changes as required. Those standards may differ between facilities or municipalities, so the onus is on the Member to reach out as part of the facility rental agreement process for clarification of the following:

- Guidelines and requirements specific to physical distancing?
- Restrictions on the number of people allowed in public areas?
- Entry and/or re-entry rules? Will masks be required?
- Areas not accessible in the facility – main lobby, dressing rooms, spectator area, etc?
- Dressing rooms available? If not, what options are available for players and parents?
- Common areas available to put on skates with marked physical-distanced seating?
- Cleaning and disinfection processes implemented by facility owners?
  - How often are common touchpoints serviced?
  - Are there requirements of user groups to sanitize arena facilities or equipment as part of the rental agreement?

It is recommended that a ***force majeure clause*** be included in any future contracts that you negotiate.

### SPECTATORS

The allowance of spectators is at the discretion of each facility and should they be allowed the following guidelines are in place:

- Spectators must follow all Alberta Health Services, municipal and facility guidelines.
- Spectators (excluding parents and guardians where necessary for player support) should be kept out of participant spaces (for example, fields of play, courts, ice surfaces).
- Physical distancing (minimum 2 metres) is required unless spectators are from the same core cohort.
- Up to a maximum of 100 spectators are allowed, according to current Government of Alberta guidelines.
- It is strongly recommended that all spectators wear masks, especially in an indoor setting.
- Cheering and yelling are strongly discouraged as they present a high risk of spreading droplets.





# 5 COACHES, TEAM OFFICIALS AND ON-ICE OFFICIALS CERTIFICATION/ TRAINING

The structure of certification and training clinics and seminars for Coaches, Team Officials and On-Ice Officials has been confirmed by Hockey Canada and Hockey Alberta for the 2020-21 season. Certification programs will include a combination of in-person clinics (using physical distancing) and online programming.

## COACHES/ TEAM OFFICIALS

Hockey Alberta will maintain the same requirements for all Coaches and Team Officials for the 2020-21 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.

### [RETURN TO HOCKEY SAFETY MODULE >](#)

The list of current coaching requirements is available under the Coaches tab on the Hockey Alberta website: [GO TO COACH EDUCATION >](#)

## ON-ICE OFFICIALS

For new officials, and returning Level I and II officials, in-person certification clinics will not start until after 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) session to obtain their certification for 2020-21. These clinics will be available starting in late September.

For any official who was certified in the 2019-20, 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 TBC). Check the Hockey Alberta Officials website ([officials.hockeyalberta.ca](http://officials.hockeyalberta.ca)) for updates and current information pertaining to officiating and the 2020-21 season.

These revised timelines for clinics and certification align with on-ice officials are not required until the Modified Competition Season component 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 on the Hockey Canada website (<https://hockeycanada.ca/en-ca/exclusive/return-to-hockey/plans/officiating>) or in Appendix 6.

[See Appendix 7 – Hockey Canada Officiating Guide - NEW](#)



# RETURN TO HOCKEY PROGRAMMING





## 6 RETURN TO HOCKEY PROGRAMMING

Stage 2 of the Government of Alberta's Relaunch Plan has authorized recreational facilities, including arenas, to open and host activity using safety and risk management measures. This provides the opportunity for hockey participation to resume. Travel restrictions for participants are included to reduce risk of people from different communities interacting and increasing risk of exposure to infection.

Hockey Alberta's Return to Hockey Plan is comprised of activity components to help organizations prepare for the return to regularly scheduled hockey within a league structure. The Plan's components are:

- I. Off-Season Skill Development
- II. Development Season
- III. Modified Competition Season - NEW**
- IV. Regular Season

The use and timing of each component are dependent on the health and safety requirements in Alberta as well as the needs of your local community.

The components outlined in this section provide the framework for Hockey Alberta Members and sanctioned partners (inclusive of all abilities, levels and streams of hockey) to plan their return to hockey activities. Launch dates for any component may differ as these will vary depending on the levels of hockey (Senior, Junior, Elite, Minor, etc.).

Members are not required to submit their plans to Hockey Alberta for approval, but all activity must adhere to the standards herein, the Government of Alberta regulations, and with Hockey Canada's guidelines to continue to be eligible to operate.

### IMPORTANT NOTES:

- Physical Distancing remains an integral part of the Government of Alberta's Relaunch Plan. Practicing physical distancing in an activity helps to reduce the risk of transmission as well as allows participants more flexibility to participate in other activities.
- Stage 2 of the Government of Alberta's Relaunch Plan also identifies types of Cohorts and the guidelines for those.

**See Government of Alberta Website:** (<https://www.alberta.ca/prevent-the-spread.aspx>).

### **See Appendix 8 – Guidance on Cohorts**

- Cohorting has been identified as an option for Sports to use if athletes are not always able to practice physical distancing during activity.
- A Cohort is a closed, small group of no more than 50 individuals who participate in sport together.
- Cohorts should remain together for the entire duration of Stage 2 of the Government of Alberta's relaunch wherever possible.
- Interacting with the same people within a cohort will be safer than constantly changing the people you interact with.
- If Cohorting is being used for a program, this should be clearly communicated to participants/parents prior to the formation of the Cohort.
- Using Cohorts provides an opportunity to add a level of competition into an activity that cannot normally be operated using physical distancing.
  - All individuals (participants, officials, coaches and trainers) who cannot maintain a 2-metre distance from others at all times are considered part of the Cohort.
  - Sports cohort numbers do not include parents or spectators.





- Instructors, Coaches and/or Team Officials can be part of one Cohort and remain with that group throughout the duration of this program, or they may physical distance from all other participants at all times.
- The Government of Alberta has indicated that the safest cohorting model is to only participate in activity within the same geographical region (for example, within a county, town, quadrant of a city, or Alberta Health Zone). Participants should not seek sport, physical activity and recreation opportunities in other regions, or out of province. Cross-jurisdictional, or inter-regional, play should not occur at this stage.
- The Government of Alberta recommends that an individual only be part of one Sport Cohort at any time. If an individual wishes to move to a new Sport Cohort, s/he is to complete a 14-day non-participation period prior to joining the new Cohort.
- Even while using cohorting, it is recommended to try and utilize physical distancing whenever possible (dressing rooms, benches, and in public areas).

Spectators may be allowed in the facility, subject to physical distancing measures (refer to the current Government of Alberta and local municipal restrictions) and any specific directions provided by facility management.

To obtain sanctioning from Hockey Alberta, all programs MUST abide by the guidelines provided herein (which are based on the Government of Alberta and Hockey Canada's Safety and Protocols). If the guidelines are not followed, Hockey Alberta reserves the right to remove or suspend sanctioning for any event.

If a Member is in need of assistance or clarification when putting together their organization's plans for return to hockey activities, please contact Drew Dixon, Senior Manager Member Development, ([ddixon@hockeyalberta.ca](mailto:ddixon@hockeyalberta.ca)), or submit to [membership@hockeyalberta.ca](mailto:membership@hockeyalberta.ca).

## RETURN TO HOCKEY COMPONENTS

***The province remains in a restricted state, and the primary concern for Hockey Alberta is that any programs offered as part of this Return to Hockey Plan focus on the health and safety of all participants; Safety is paramount.***

***The intent of this plan is for our Members to be able to offer hockey activity in a controlled and safe environment by using local/ regional training and development opportunities. Following this plan will allow Members to provide development and competition for players as we await a return to the regular hockey season model.***

***NOTE: The building of programming in the Off-Season Skill Development and Development Season is the responsibility of the Member organization. Hockey Alberta is available to answer questions or provide clarification as required.***

### RETURN TO HOCKEY COMPONENTS

COMPONENT	START DATE	PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	TRAVEL RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTIVITY
Off-Season Skill Development	June 1 – August 31	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants from the local community area; OR</li> <li>For a program with Physical Distancing in place, participants that reside within a 200 km radius of the host community; OR</li> <li>For a program using Cohorting, participants that reside within a 100 km radius of the host community.</li> </ol>	<p>Non-essential travel should be limited.</p> <p>Players should access programs in their immediate area where possible.</p> <p>Travel to participate in activity outside the <a href="#">Alberta Health Region</a> where the participant resides is not recommended.</p>	<p>Programs may be delivered using Physical Distancing or Cohorting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Off-ice sessions</li> <li>Skills camps</li> <li>Development programs</li> <li>Hockey schools</li> </ul>
Development Season	August 1 – TBD	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants from the established registration area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tiered Hockey - MHA Boundary</li> <li>Minor Female - Closest Female Program</li> <li>Hockey Canada Accredited Schools (HCAS) - No Restrictions</li> <li>AA Hockey - Recruitment Area</li> <li>AAA Hockey - Draw Zone</li> <li>Junior/ Senior - No Restrictions</li> </ul> </li> <li>AAA programs can operate 'tryout' sessions for each specific level of hockey, using physical distancing, to identify a group of players to bring into a Cohort. Reminder: A Cohort is a maximum of 50 people.</li> <li></li> </ol>	<p>Non-essential travel should be limited.</p> <p>Players should access programs in their immediate area where possible.</p> <p>Travel to participate in activity outside the <a href="#">Alberta Health Region</a> where the participant resides is not recommended.</p>	<p>Programs may be delivered using Physical Distancing or Cohorting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skills Sessions</li> <li>On-Ice Practices</li> <li>Off-Ice Training</li> <li>Inter-Squad Game Play (3v3, 4v4 or 5v5)</li> </ul> <p>Players can be grouped by age and/or skill level; programming can assist to determine skill levels of players.</p> <p>Tournaments not permitted.</p>
<b>MODIFIED COMPETITION SEASON</b>	<b>TBD</b> <b>(No earlier than Nov. 1)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using the Development Season criteria, participants should be registered and the evaluation/ sorting process underway for the specific level of hockey.</li> <li>Participants from the established registration area. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tiered Hockey - MHA Boundary</li> <li>Minor Female - Closest Female Program</li> <li>HCAS - No Restrictions</li> <li>AA Hockey - Recruitment Area</li> <li>AAA Hockey - Draw Zone</li> <li>Junior/ Senior - No Restrictions</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<p>Teams grouped into regional 'Pods' for competition purposes.</p> <p>A Pod includes 3-5 teams, depending on Government of Alberta guidelines.</p> <p>Teams play within their Pod for the duration of the Modified Competition Season.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skills Sessions</li> <li>On-Ice Practices</li> <li>Off-Ice Training</li> <li>Game Play within Pods</li> </ul> <p>This component provides the opportunity to finalize any tryouts/ evaluations, register rosters and prepare for an eventual return to the Regular Season, when permitted.</p> <p>Tournaments: TBD</p>
Regular Season	TBD	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using the Development Season criteria, participants should be registered and the evaluation/ sorting process underway for the specific level of hockey.</li> <li>Participants from the established registration area. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tiered Hockey - MHA boundary</li> <li>Minor Female - Closest Female Program</li> <li>HCAS - No Restrictions</li> <li>AA Hockey - Recruitment Area</li> <li>AAA Hockey - Draw Zone</li> <li>Junior/ Senior - No Restrictions</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<p>Restrictions on travel could still be in place.</p> <p>Scheduling play within regions/ conferences will be considered.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skills Sessions</li> <li>On-Ice Practices</li> <li>Off-Ice Training</li> <li>League Play</li> </ul> <p>Tournaments: TBD</p>



## OFF-SEASON SKILL DEVELOPMENT

### OVERVIEW

Off-Season Skill Development programs are to focus on physical activity, training and skill development for the participants. These programs are available to be operated for all ages, levels and systems of hockey. Programs can be off- or on-ice, based on current provincial government regulations and restrictions. The building of programming is the responsibility of the Member organization. Hockey Alberta is available to answer questions or provide clarification as required.

[See Appendix 9 – Alberta Government Sports Relaunch – Stage 2 \(updated July 20\)](#)

[See Appendix 10 – Hockey Canada Sanctioning Guidelines](#)

### Types of Programs Permitted

- Off-Ice Training: any training activity organized by a Hockey Alberta Member or sanctioned partner that takes place off-ice and meets the required sanctioning criteria. These programs can focus on individual skill development and overall athleticism, or may be used for team building, training and/or evaluation processes.
- Skills Camps: on-ice sessions that take place over a period of one to three days.
- Development Programs: on-ice sessions within a defined schedule taking place over the course of weeks and/or months.
- Hockey Schools: on and off-ice sessions that take place over a period of three or more days and engage players in various types of skill development.
- Identification Camps for Junior and AAA hockey programs (with regional restrictions).

### Program Operation

#### i. With Physical Distancing

- Aligning with current physical distancing measures, all participants remain a minimum of two metres apart during participation.
- On-ice programs should utilize either a lane setup formation or a station-based setup formation. Both formations allow for physical distancing of two metres to be maintained.

[See Appendix 11 – Lane Formation Diagram](#)

[See Appendix 12 – Station-Based Formation Diagram](#)

- Each ice session must be planned and communicated in advance to on-ice participants and parents.
- On-ice markings can help with physical distancing while performing skills or waiting in line.
- Try to limit the amount of wait time in lines and if wait time is required ensure these markings are clearly communicated and identified to participants.
- The advantages of physical distancing are:
  - It is safer from a risk perspective for COVID-19 transmission.
  - Athletes may participate in more than one activity.
- **Options for structuring play using Physical Distancing:**
  - Well-spaced circuits develop a variety of skills while keeping players moving.
  - Relay races add competition to ice sessions. Routes and rules ensure proper physical distancing.
  - Skill competitions add competition and provide benchmarking to show tangible development training improvements.
  - Consider using goaltenders, but ensure players are not deking or playing out rebounds. One shot and done from at least two metres out from the goaltender.





- If goaltenders are not used, consider using shooter tutors or in-net targets for drills that finish with a shot on net.
- Goalie-specific sessions can be delivered as physical distancing can easily be achieved.
- On-ice equipment (nets, divider boards) and training aids (pylons, shooter tutors etc) are to be placed and moved by coaches. Training aids are to be sanitized at the completion of the session by a coach.

## ii. With Cohorting

- Cohorts help mitigate the risk of widespread transmission by limiting the number of athletes that come within close contact of each other.
- An advantage of participating in a Cohort is it can more closely resemble regular practices and game play.
- Cohort participants can be grouped together to participate in small area games, scrimmages etc.

## Registration Protocols

- Sanctioning:
  - Members (including MHAs, Club Teams, Sledge Hockey, Accredited Schools, etc.) wishing to operate a sanctioned Off-Season Skill Development program must apply via Hockey Alberta's online Special Event Sanction system in the Centre Ice Portal.
  - Members can operate activity in accordance with Hockey Canada guidelines and, when doing so, they know they have insurance coverage.
  - Organizations applying for an Alternate Season sanction will complete the application process as per Hockey Alberta's Alternate Season policy and procedures, as well as submit an online Sanction request for a specific Off-Season Skill Development program.
  - Once a sanction is approved, the Member/ sanctioned program must submit a participant listing to Hockey Alberta showing all players, instructors and officials that will be involved. Information required on the form includes:
    1. Name of Member and Event hosted, Date of Event, Location of Event, Participant Names, Addresses, Contact Details, Dates of Birth.
    2. The list is to be submitted via the link contained in the email that contains the Sanction number.
- Participant Eligibility Criteria:
  - Participants from the local community area.  
OR
  - For a program with Physical Distancing in place, participants that reside within a 200 km radius of the host community.  
OR
  - For a program using Cohorting, participants that reside within a 100 km radius of the host community.
  - Travel outside the [Alberta Health Region](#) where the participant resides is not recommended.
- Participant Registration:
  - Members (including MHAs, Club Teams, Sledge Hockey, Accredited Schools, etc.) who offer Off-Season Development programs (June, July and August) can do so for their 2019-20 membership with no additional registration/ insurance costs.
  - Organizations applying for an Alternate Season sanction will be required to pay registration and insurance fees as per Hockey Alberta's Alternate Season policy and procedures.
  - As a result of Hockey Canada's insurance coverage, waivers are not required for any participants.



## II DEVELOPMENT SEASON

### OVERVIEW

Hockey Alberta Members (including MHAs, Club Teams, Sledge Hockey, Accredited Schools, etc.) may operate development programming starting off the 2020-21 season. Organizations can take player registrations and start to sort players into similar skill level groupings in preparation for a smooth transition to a competitive model once Government of Alberta guidelines permit.

The building of programming is the responsibility of the Member organization. Hockey Alberta is available to answer questions or provide clarification as required.

### Types of Programs Permitted

- Skills Sessions
- On-Ice Practices
- Off-Ice Training
- **Inter-Squad Game Play** (3v3, 4v4 or 5v5)
- **Team Training** (for Junior and AAA only)
- **Exhibition Series** (for Junior and AAA only)

### Program Operation

#### i. With Physical Distancing

- Aligning with current physical distancing measures, all participants remain a minimum of two metres apart during participation.
- Physical distancing programming should be used:
  - Any time a skill development activity involves players and instructors/ team officials from more than one group or team; or
  - Anytime a Cohort has not been put in place.
- For more details and options on Physical Distancing options, refer to Off-Season Skill Development.

#### ii. With Cohorting

- Forming Cohorts is at the discretion of each organization. Many factors including the number of registered players, age division, and skill range will come into play.
- To enhance the experience of all participants, it is recommended that MHAs and/or Teams use evaluation and/or sorting methods to identify like-skilled players for each Cohort within MHA boundaries.
- In some cases, only one age division will be needed to establish a viable Cohort. In other cases, organizations may need to combine age divisions to establish a large enough participant group for a Cohort.
- In cases where smaller MHAs are unable to form a Cohort, obtaining approval from Hockey Alberta to join with neighbouring MHAs is an acceptable alternative.
- Each Cohort can be comprised of a maximum of 50 people. Any game play will be limited to inter-squad play within the same Cohort. Groups in different Cohorts cannot play each other.
- For examples of cohorting, check Appendix 12 – Cohort Examples.

[See Appendix 13 – Cohort Examples](#)



### Player Development

Activities should be divided to focus on the four components that play an important part in helping a player have a successful season.

- **Physical:** Warm Up/Cool Down, Performance (Hydration, Nutrition, Sleep)
- **Mental:** Team Identity, Goal Setting
- **Life Skills:** Team Building, Citizenship
- **Technical/ Tactical/ Team Skills:** On-Ice, Off-Ice Development



While operating programs, work can be done in all four areas. Resources can be found by visiting the [Coach Resources](http://hockeyalberta.ca/coaches/coaching-resources/) webpage (hockeyalberta.ca/coaches/coaching-resources/).

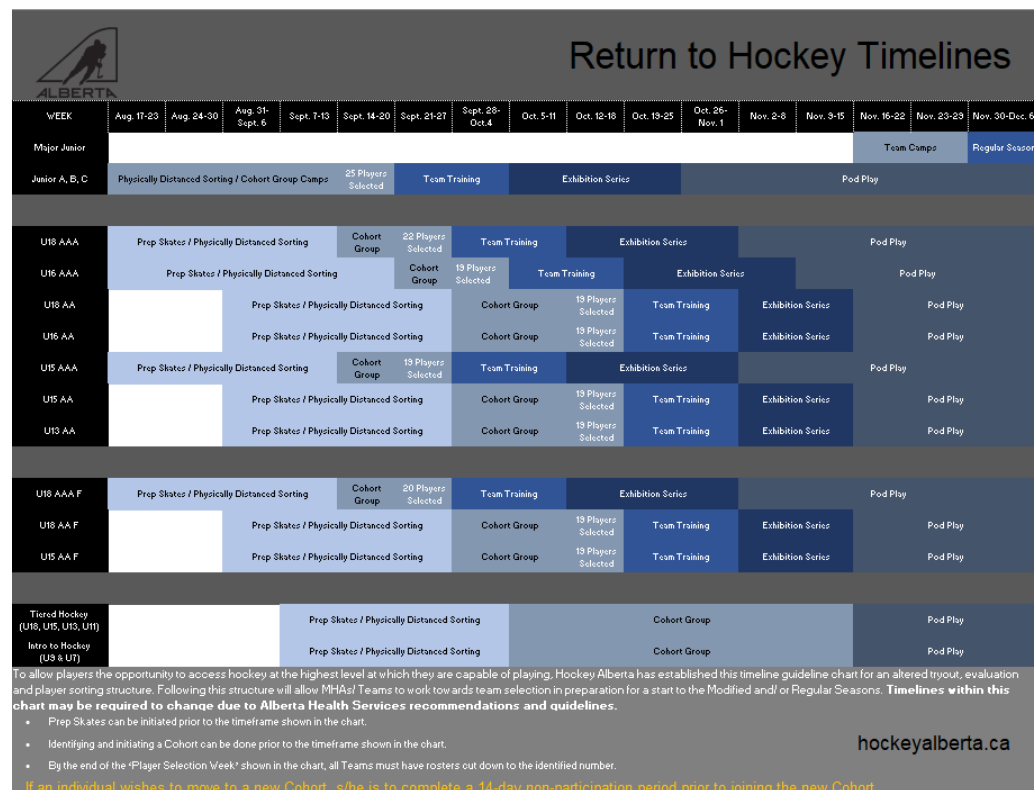
### Tryouts, Evaluations, Sorting Players

Within the Development Season, MHAs/ Teams may start, and for some levels of hockey complete, the player evaluation and/or tryout process. This will allow MHAs/ Teams to complete player selection and rostering in preparation for a competitive season.

To allow players the opportunity to access hockey at the highest level at which they are capable of playing, Hockey Alberta has established a timeline guideline (see Appendix 14, Return to Hockey Timelines, or review the chart below) for an altered tryout, evaluation and player sorting structure. Following this structure will allow MHAs/ Teams to work towards team selection in preparation for a start to the Modified and/ or Regular seasons. **Timelines within this chart may be required to change due to Government of Alberta recommendations and guidelines.**

Please note:

- Prep Skates can be initiated prior to the timeframe shown in the chart.
- Identifying and initiating a Cohort can be done prior to the timeframe shown in the chart.
- By the end of the 'Player Selection Week' shown in the chart, all teams must have rosters cut down to the identified number.



**See Appendix 14 – Return to Hockey Timelines**



Whenever possible, tryout sessions should be conducted using physical distancing in order to mitigate the risk of transmission.

- If programs wish to include more than 40 players in their Tryout process, they will be permitted to operate 'Tryout' sessions with physical distancing measures in place. These sessions will assist in the identification of the players that will move on to participate in the Cohort.
- Programs that can/ wish to immediately identify a maximum of 40 players can do so and create their Cohort for the Development Season.
- Players may be allowed to access a second tryout outside of their established registration area (AA recruitment area, AAA draw zone, etc.), in accordance with current regulations. Third tryouts will not be permitted.
- Teams should make decisions on releasing players as early as possible to help move those players to the next level and through the system.
- The only game play permitted within the Development Season is inter-squad play involving players from within the Cohort and/ or the Exhibition Series that may be set up for AAA hockey.
- It is incumbent on the organization, parents, and players to be in full communication with each other through the tryout process. The goal through this process is to ensure the athlete plays the appropriate level of hockey.

#### **Development Season Definitions**

- **Prep Skate:** Physical Distancing skill development sessions to prepare for evaluations/ regular season (the number of players included in each ice session should be kept low in order to properly accommodate the physical distancing measures that are required).
- **Physical Distancing Sorting/ Evaluations:** Skill development sessions and skills evaluations for the purpose of selecting your Cohort group. All participants (including coaches) must be two metres apart from each other at all times. The number of players participating in each ice session should be kept low to properly accommodate the physical distancing requirements. **A maximum of 30 individuals are permitted on the ice at any one time. The recommendation is that there are only 16-24 players on the ice at one time.**
- **Cohort Selection Group:** A maximum of 50 people (which includes coaches and support staff) that participate in drills and inter-squad play where Physical Distancing cannot be maintained. Used for the purpose of evaluating players, introducing competition into the Development Season and selecting your team.
- **Team Training:** Timeframe when your selected Team can begin team development and training.
- **Exhibition Series:** Hockey Alberta and the respective Leagues will determine pairs of Teams (by region) to pair up for competition purposes.

[See Appendix 15 – Player Selection Resource Guide](#)

#### **Officiating**

As this component involves practices and inter-squad play only, on-ice officials are not necessary. If officials are used, given the challenges of physical distancing on the ice, those officials must be included as part of the identified Cohort.

#### **Registration Protocols**

- Sanctioning:
  - Members (including MHAs, Club Teams, Sledge Hockey, Accredited Schools, etc.) can schedule and operate sanctioned events without having to complete any additional application processes.
  - Members can operate activity in accordance with Hockey Canada guidelines and, when doing so, they know they have coverage.
  - No Travel Permits or Tournament Sanctions will be approved during the Development Season.
  - Hockey Alberta reserves the right to rescind a sanction for any program that does not adhere to these guidelines.



- Eligible Participants:
  - Participants from the established registration area.
    - i. Tiered Hockey - MHA boundary (Please refer to page 16 “Program Operation”)
    - ii. Minor Female - Closest Female Program
    - iii. AA Hockey - Recruitment Area
    - iv. AAA Hockey - Draw Zone
    - v. Senior/ Junior Hockey - No Restrictions
- Participant Registration:
  - At the discretion of the Member, there are two options for registering players and team officials at this stage:
    - 1. Register all participants onto rosters in accordance with the normal procedures. (This is only recommended if your organization has completed the player evaluation/ tryout process and/ or knows the players who should be on each Team).
    - OR
    - 2. Register all participants onto group lists in HCR. Complete this based on the age division to track individuals who have signed-up to play within your organization.
  - Requests for team rosters and age division group lists are submitted in accordance with normal procedures.
  - Members will follow existing regulations and policies (ie: boundaries) regarding player eligibility and complete the registration process for players eligible for their own programs.
  - Affiliation will not be permitted to be filed nor used during the Development Season.



## MODIFIED COMPETITION SEASON

When Government of Alberta restrictions on travel and the number of people allowed in a gathering are lifted, Hockey Alberta and our sanctioned Leagues will have a plan in place for a safe and productive transition into a 'Modified Competition Season'. Communication will be integral to ensure everyone is educated on what precautions are in place and what alterations to the traditional regular season structure exist.

This Modified Competition Season will not commence (for any level of hockey) before November 1, 2020. Depending on the Government of Alberta guidelines and recommendations, the start of this component could be delayed until later in the 2020-21 season.

- Teams will be grouped into regional 'Pods', by level of hockey, for competition purposes.
- A Pod will include 3-5 teams, depending on Government recommendations.
- Teams will only play within their Pod for the duration of this component.

### **Types of Programs permitted:**

- On-Ice Practices
- Off-Ice Training
- Pod Games – Teams may be grouped into regional 'Pods' of 3-5 Teams for competition purposes.
- Tournaments – Timelines for tournament dates will be confirmed by Hockey Alberta based on Government of Alberta protocols.

### **Registration Protocols:**

#### Sanctioning:

- Members (including MHAs, Club Teams, Sledge Hockey, Accredited Schools, etc.) can schedule and operate sanctioned events without having to complete any additional application processes.
- Members can operate activity in accordance with Hockey Canada guidelines and, when doing so, they know they have coverage.
- Out of Province travel may be restricted depending on Federal and Provincial government recommendations and restrictions.
- Timelines for when requests for tournament sanctions will be considered will be confirmed by Hockey Alberta based on Government of Alberta protocols.

#### Participant Registration:

- Team Order and Registration deadlines may be amended based on start-up dates.
- Deadlines for Team Official/ Coach education requirements may be amended based on start-up dates.
- Register all participants onto rosters in accordance with the normal procedures. (This is only recommended if your organization has been able to complete the player evaluation/ tryout process and/ or know which players should be on each Team).
- With a later start to the season, Minor Hockey Affiliation deadlines will move to January 15, to align with all other levels of hockey.
- All carryover suspensions from the previous season will be applied to players and team officials for this stage and must be served in full prior to participating.

### **Officiating**

Certified on-ice officials will be used during the Modified Competition Season. Requirements and other details of the integration of officials into Cohorts will be finalized and distributed once known.





## IV REGULAR SEASON

When restrictions on travel are lifted, regularly scheduled 5-on-5 hockey operated by Leagues will be eligible to return. Hockey Alberta will work with Members and Leagues to return to play in a safe and productive manner. Communication is integral to ensure everyone knows if there are precautions and/ or alteration to the traditional structure in place.

### **Types of Programs permitted:**

- On-Ice Practices
- Off-Ice Training
- Exhibition Games
- League Games – Scheduling within League play could still consider some travel restrictions to reduce time commitments and cost.
- Tournaments – Timelines for tournament dates will be confirmed by Hockey Alberta based on Government of Alberta protocols.

### **Registration Protocols:**

#### Sanctioning:

- Members (including MHAs, Club Teams, Sledge Hockey, Accredited Schools, etc.) can schedule and operate sanctioned events without having to complete any additional application processes.
- Members can operate activity in accordance with Hockey Canada guidelines and, when doing so, they know they have coverage.
- Out of Province travel may be restricted depending on Federal and Provincial government recommendations and restrictions.
  - Timelines for when requests for tournament sanctions will be considered will be confirmed by Hockey Alberta based on Government of Alberta protocols.

#### Registration:

- Team Order and Registration deadlines may be amended based on start-up dates.
- Deadlines for Team Official/ Coach education requirements may be amended based on start-up dates.
- Register all participants onto rosters in accordance with the normal procedures. (This is only recommended if your organization has been able to complete the player evaluation/ tryout process and/ or know which players should be on each Team).
- With a later start to the season, Minor Hockey Affiliation deadlines will move to January 15, to align with all other levels of hockey.
- All carryover suspensions from the previous season will be applied to players and team officials for this stage and must be served in full prior to participating.

**Full details pertaining to the Regular Season component of the Return to Hockey Plan will be circulated once start dates are able to be identified based on updates to the Government of Alberta's Relaunch Plan.**

# APPENDICES

(Appendices can be accessed on the Hockey Alberta website:

[RETURN TO HOCKEY PLAN >](#)

