



Return from Illness or Injury Policy

Purpose

To ensure the safety and well-being of our players and bench staff by providing clear guidelines for returning to ringette activities after an injury or illness.

This policy has been adopted by the West Ottawa Ringette Association (WORA) to ensure that members' safety and well-being are paramount in the decision making process for resuming participation in ringette activities after sustaining an injury or illness, including but not limited to:

- Games
- Practices
- Warm-ups
- Off-ice training
- Power skating
- Dryland training
- Treadmill
- Any other WORA or team-related events

Concussion-Specific Protocol

This policy **does not apply** in the case of a suspected concussion. A player or bench staff with a suspected or confirmed concussion **must** follow Ringette Ontario's Concussion Policy and guidelines, which are outlined in the policies available under [Concussion Awareness and Management](#).

Scope

This policy applies to any WORA player or bench staff member who:

- Sustains an injury that impacts their ability to participate in ringette activities, whether the injury occurred while participating in ringette activities or otherwise;
- Removes themselves or is removed by a guardian or bench staff from participation in a ringette activities due to injury or illness, or suspected injury or illness;
- Contracts a serious illness (such as mononucleosis).

Policy

1. Medical Clearance:

- The team's trainer must be provided with a medical note which either:
 - Outlines guidelines for returning to ringette activities; or
 - Confirms the individual is medically fit to resume participation in ringette activities without restriction
- Alternatively, if no medical treatment is sought, the trainer must be provided with:
 - Written confirmation from the individual (or legal guardian if under 18) stating they believe that medical treatment is not required, and that they wish to return to ringette activities.

2. Assessment:

- Upon receipt of the medical note or written confirmation, the player or bench staff is required to participate in an on-ice practice for assessment by the team's Trainer and at least one of the team's coaches to ensure the individual is symptom-free.

3. Decision-Making:

- When making a determination as to whether an individual can return to ringette activity, the determination shall lie solely with the Trainer.
- The Trainer will determine (in the exercise of a sole discretion and acting reasonably), acting in the best interests of the player or bench staff's safety and well-being, whether the individual can return to ringette activities.
- The Trainer may seek support from other bench staff or the Vice President.
- In the event of a disagreement, the decision of the Vice President shall govern. In case of dispute where an immediate decision is required (eg: mid-game) and the Vice President is unavailable, the Trainer shall err on the side of caution and prioritize the safety and well-being of the injured individual.
- If the Trainer is personally involved (for example, the Trainer is the parent of the impacted player, or the Trainer is the impacted bench staff):
 - The Trainer shall not participate in the decision-making process; and
 - If the situation does not require an immediate response, the Vice President will assume the position of the Trainer for decision making; otherwise
 - If the situation requires an immediate response, and the Vice President is not available, the entire Bench Staff who are present shall assume the position of the Trainer for decision making, and a consensus must be reached between the Bench Staff who are present. In the event of a disagreement where an immediate decision is required (eg: mid-game), the Bench Staff shall err on the side of caution and prioritize the safety and well-being of the injured individual.

Important note: the decision made by the Trainer is a safety determination only, and **is not a medical determination.**

A medical determination lies exclusively with a medical professional who is treating the injury or illness; e.g. family physician, physiotherapist, etc. Where a medical professional is involved, the medical professional's determination is definitive.

Where a medical professional is not involved, the Trainer should rely on their overall understanding of the circumstances, using their best judgement, to act in the best interest of the player or bench staff. If the Trainer is not comfortable with making such a decision, the Vice President should be involved to make the decision.

4. Reporting:

- Trainers **must** track and report all injuries for their team that occur as a result of ringette activities, and are responsible for reporting all injuries and illnesses to Ringette Ontario using the [Ringette Ontario Injury Tracker](#)
- Trainers **must also** report all injuries and illnesses through [WORA's injury reporting tool](#) for internal notification. This tool is made available only for the purpose of notifying WORA's Executive Board of Directors. No further action will be taken upon receipt of a report. While the Vice President is available to assist, they will only become involved in a decision regarding an injury or illness when their involvement is explicitly requested.
- The Trainer **must also** forward a copy of the WORA Injury Report to the team's Head Coach.

Resources:

- [Ringette Ontario Injury Tracker](#)
- [WORA injury reporting tool](#)
- [Ringette Ontario Concussion Policy](#)
- [Ringette Ontario Concussion Code of Conduct - Athletes](#)
- [Ringette Ontario Concussion Code of Conduct - Bench Staff](#)
- [Ringette Ontario Return to Play Policy](#)
- [Ringette Ontario Concussion Management Guidelines](#)

Reviewed and revised July 2024