



# OWHA

## OFFICIATING HANDBOOK



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# Welcome from OWHA

Welcome to the hockey season and the OWHA Officiating Program.

We value your commitment and dedication to women's hockey. Without Officials, OWHA participants would not have the opportunity to enjoy playing hockey in one of the world's largest female hockey associations in the world. Your dedication to continuously improving your skills and rule knowledge as an Official helps to cultivate a positive experience for players to enjoy the game of hockey in a safe and fair manner.

The OWHA was formed in 1975 and 2025 marks its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Since the beginning, the OWHA has been a values-driven association that recognizes the importance of all stakeholders and focusses on a positive life and hockey experience for every participant. The strength and unity of players, coaches, trainers, officials and volunteers has kept the game in perspective and has enabled and empowered great leaders who have impacted women's hockey and women's sports throughout Ontario, Canada and the world.

The OWHA Officiating Program strives to create a welcoming culture to support ongoing growth and learning for all OWHA Officials. To support your continued growth, we encourage you to reach out to your local Officiating Coach throughout the season or contact the OWHA at [refs@owha.on.ca](mailto:refs@owha.on.ca) if you have any questions or concerns.

You are valued as officials and as people and we hope you stay safe and enjoy the season.

Fran Rider  
OWHA President

Heather Richardson  
OWHA Director of Officiating



## OWHA Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct identifies the standard of behaviour which is expected of all Ontario Women's Hockey Association (OWHA) Members, including athletes, coaches, parents, Officials, directors, volunteers, staff, chaperones, and others. OWHA Teams, Associations, Programmes and Leagues are committed to providing a sport environment in which all individuals are treated with respect. Members of the OWHA shall conduct themselves at all times in a fair and responsible manner. Members shall refrain from comments or behaviours which are disrespectful, offensive, abusive, racist or sexist. In particular, behaviour which constitutes harassment, abuse, bullying or cyber-bullying will not be tolerated by the OWHA.

During the course of all OWHA activities and events, members shall avoid behaviour which brings OWHA members or the sport of hockey into disrepute, including but not limited to abusive use of alcohol and non-medical use of drugs.

Members shall not use unlawful or unauthorized drugs/narcotics or performance enhancing drugs or methods.

Members of the OWHA shall not engage in activity or behaviour which endangers the safety of others.

OWHA members shall at all times adhere to the OWHA Team, Association, Programme, and League operational policies and procedures, to rules governing OWHA events and activities, and to rules governing any competition in which the member participates on behalf of the OWHA.

Failure to comply with this Code of Conduct and/or the OWHA Concussion Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action, suspension, or release from membership. Such action may result in the member losing the privileges that come with membership in the OWHA, including the opportunity to participate in OWHA activities and events, both present and future.



## Officials Code of Conduct

The OWHA takes great pride in the professionalism and expertise of officiating program participants. This professionalism requires Officials to have thorough knowledge of the rules and the ability to apply the techniques and procedures set out by the Hockey Canada Officiating Program. We expect all Officials of the OWHA to promote the game of hockey through dedication to excellence in officiating.

OWHA Officiating Program participants are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that always reflects favourably on the program and its officiating staff.

OWHA Officiating Program participants are accountable to the OWHA, OWHA Officiating Coaches, the OWHA Officiating Leadership Team and their fellow OWHA Officials for their behaviour on and off the ice.

OWHA Officiating Program participants shall not engage in any maltreatment or dishonourable conduct in the performance of their duties, including but is not limited to:

- Threatening, challenging, baiting, inciting, harassing, or abusing any peer, on-ice Official, off-ice Official, player, team Official, spectator, arena staff, league representative, or league Official.
- Failing to cooperate fully and openly with an OWHA investigation or discipline process arising from any incident.
- Intentionally violating any of the policies governing the conduct of the OWHA and its participants, including the generally applicable OWHA Code of Conduct.
- Showing favouritism.
- Use of profane language on or off the ice in the capacity of an Official.

The OWHA may discipline or remove any OWHA Officiating Program participant who violates the spirit or intent of OWHA and Hockey Canada policies and procedures or Hockey Canada's Officials' Code of Conduct.

The OWHA will remove any OWHA Officiating Participant who is currently under suspension by another branch of Hockey Canada for the duration of their suspension.

# Section 1: Registration

## 1. Annual Registration

- a. All on-ice Officials must currently be certified through the Hockey Canada Officiating Program (HCOP) and registered with OWHA and/or other recognized sanctioned hockey programs in order to be eligible to officiate OWHA games.
- b. All on-ice Officials wanting to register with the OWHA must complete the OWHA registration forms and submit them to the OWHA office annually.

## 2. Minimum Age Requirements

- a. The OWHA requires all Officials to be at least 14 years of age as of December 31<sup>st</sup> of the current hockey season to officiate House League hockey.
- b. The OWHA requires all Officials to be at least 16 years of age as of December 31<sup>st</sup> of the current hockey season and a Level 2 Official to officiate Rep hockey, unless approved by the OWHA. The process to apply for an exemption is as follows:
  - i. The Official must contact the OWHA office to make the request at [refs@owha.on.ca](mailto:refs@owha.on.ca).
  - ii. The OWHA will assign an Officiating Coach to evaluate the Official and then produce a recommendation based on the performance and capabilities of the Official. The OWHA will notify the Official and the local assignor(s) of the decision.
- c. All Officials must be a minimum of two years of age older than the division they are officiating until they reach the age of 18, after which time they may officiate all levels of hockey aligned to their capabilities.

## 3. Recertification After an Absence

After an absence, Officials should contact the OWHA office to have their Hockey Canada profile linked with the OWHA portal. The following criteria apply for reinstatement at their previous HCOP level:

- a. Following an absence of two season or less, an Official may recertify at their previous HCOP level:
  - i. Complete the HCOP recertification steps.
- b. Following an absence of more than two and less five seasons an Official may request to return at their previous level:
  - i. Complete the HCOP recertification clinic at their previous level.
  - ii. Contact the OWHA at [refs@owha.on.ca](mailto:refs@owha.on.ca) to request an Officiating Coach evaluation. The OWHA will assign an Officiating Coach to evaluate the

Official and produce a recommendation based on the performance and capabilities of the returning Official.

- c. Following an absence of five seasons or more, an Official may request returning at their previous level through the following steps:
  - i. Complete the HCOP recertification clinic as a Level 2.
  - ii. Contact the OWHA at [refs@owha.on.ca](mailto:refs@owha.on.ca) to request an Officiating Coach evaluation. The OWHA will assign an Officiating Coach to evaluate the Official and produce a recommendation based on the performance and capabilities of the returning Official.
  - iii. Successful completion of the applicable upgrade exam.

#### 4. Crossovers

- a. Officials who successfully complete an HCOP new Official clinic, HCOP re-certification clinic, or HCOP upgrade clinic may become a registered Official within the OWHA at the same level upon providing satisfactory proof of the level, completing the OWHA registration forms, and paying the applicable Crossover Fee to the OWHA office.

Click [HERE](#) to access OWHA Registration and Cross-Over forms.

#### 5. Vulnerable Sector Check

- a. All new officials who are 18 years of age and older and any returning officials who are turning 18 years of age during the upcoming season must submit a valid Vulnerable Sector Verification/Check that was obtained from their local Police Department and submitting it through the [Screening Submission Portal](#) link prior to being able to register for a Clinic

In addition to above, these officials must also submit the OWHA Criminal Offence Declaration Form as part of their registration package

- b. All Officials 18 years of age and older must submit a new Vulnerable Sector Check **OR** Enhanced Criminal Record Check to the OWHA office every three years.
- c. All Officials must submit the OWHA Criminal Offence Declaration Form on an annual basis as part of their registration package, *regardless of whether they have submitted a new Vulnerable Sector Check that year.*

**Note 1:** Returning Officials can check the status of a previously submitted Vulnerable Sector Check through their Hockey Canada HCR 3.0 Spordle Account.

**Note 2:** Standard Criminal Record Checks will no longer be accepted in place of a Vulnerable Sector Check. Either a VSC or an Enhanced Criminal Record Check must be submitted to the OWHA every three years.



**Note 3:** Screening submissions for on-ice Officials will begin on June 1 for the upcoming season.

## 6. HCOP Level Upgrade Process

- a. Level 3 Upgrade – by invitation from the OWHA
  - i. Must be an OWHA Level 2 Official in good standing.
  - ii. Should have at least three years of officiating experience.
  - iii. Should currently officiate at the U13AA and/or U15BB level, or higher, in the 2-Official system.
  - iv. Must possess strong skating, judgement, and rule knowledge.
  - v. Must be recommended by an Officiating Coach and approved by OWHA.
- b. OWHA Officiating Member High Performance – by invitation from the OWHA
  - i. Should be an OWHA Level 3 Official in good standing. Level 2 Officials may be considered on an exception basis by the OWHA.
  - ii. Should be 18 years of age or older as of December 31<sup>st</sup>, of the current hockey season.
  - iii. Should have at least 3 years of officiating experience.
  - iv. Should currently officiate at least at U18AA level for 3-Official system.
  - v. Must possess strong skating, judgement, and rule knowledge.
  - vi. Must be recommended by an OWHA Officiating Coach or a current OWHA Officiating member of the High Performance program and be approved by OWHA.
- c. National High Performance –by invitation from Hockey Canada in consultation with the OWHA

*Participation as part of the OWHA Officiating Program, the High Performance Program, the Officiating Coaching Program, and the Officiating Leadership Team is assessed and renewed annually. Continued participation in these programs may be denied for a variety of reasons, as referenced in this handbook, or as outlined within the specific program.*

*The OWHA reserves the right to make decisions as deemed appropriate by it.*



## Section 2: Game Procedures

### 1. Dress Code

All on-ice Officials and Officiating Coaches shall abide by the following dress code to all their assignments:

- a. For all levels of hockey, unless a higher standard of attire is required; business casual is the minimum standard of dress. The following items are not acceptable: jeans, tights/leggings, track pants, ball caps, work uniforms, coveralls, t-shirts, or any clothing item with team and association logos.
- b. On-ice attire must conform with OWHA and Hockey Canada requirements. Cresting is allowed only on referee's sweaters and only cresting approved by the OWHA is permitted to be worn by the on-ice Officials.

### 2. Mandatory Equipment

All on-ice OWHA Officials must wear the following minimum mandatory equipment when participating in an OWHA game:

- a. CSA approved black helmet with ear coverings and a CSA approved half visor.
- b. Wearing a BNQ approved throat protector is mandatory for all on-ice Officials at all levels of OWHA hockey.
- c. Official Hockey Canada approved style jersey (i.e., no NHL-style jerseys) with OWHA and Hockey Canada Cresting only.
- d. Black pants
- e. Hockey skates

Refer to [Appendix B](#) for information on additional recommended equipment.

### 3. Arrival Time

- a. The OWHA expects Officials to be onsite a minimum of 30 minutes prior to the scheduled game time unless a different league standard is set. Extenuating circumstances or competing commitments may require a deviation from this practice – in such cases Officials must inform their Officiating partners and local assignors.

### 4. Dressing Room

- a. OWHA Dressing Room Policy is posted on the OWHA website, under [Forms & Policies](#) and must be adhered to at all times.

## 5. Game Officials

- a. All Officials must be a minimum of two years of age older than the division they are officiating until they reach the age of 18, after which time they may officiate all levels of hockey aligned to their capabilities.
- b. Officials assigned to Rep League games must be at least HCOP Level 2, or higher, currently registered Officials, unless approved by the OWHA. Refer to [Minimum Age Requirements](#) for exception request process information.
- c. In OWHA games that require the 3-Official system, the referee must be an HCOP Level 3, or higher, currently registered Official.
- d. House League game Officials must be an HCOP Level 1, or higher, currently registered Official.
- e. Under extenuating circumstances, an Official may officiate a game by themselves if they feel comfortable doing so and both teams (i.e., Head Coaches and/or Managers) agree to proceed. This must be referenced in the Notes section of the game sheet.

## 6. Maximum Game Allowance

- a. On-ice Officials will be permitted to work a maximum of three consecutive games and a maximum of six total games per day.
- b. Following three consecutive games, officials should break for a minimum time equal to the duration of one game prior to returning for additional games.
- c. In the case of emergency or extenuating circumstances, additional games may be approved, to a maximum of two additional games. Additional games must be approved by the OWHA.

## 7. Interactions with Team Officials

- a. Game Officials shall meet with staff from both teams at their respective benches prior to game (i.e., during warm-up). It is a best practice for Officials to introduce themselves and wish both teams a safe and good game.
- b. Officials shall not invite any team or local association participants into the Official's dressing room prior to or following a game. Should Game Officials feel comfortable answering inquiries and questions by team personnel, the interaction must occur outside the Official's dressing room, and in the presence of another on-ice Official.
- c. Officials are not to comment on **any** potential suspensions at any time. Inquiries about suspensions must be directed to the OWHA.
- d. OWHA teams shake hands following games based on judgement by officials. Handshakes do not take place prior to games.

## 8. Game Sheets & Game Reports

- a. Prior to each game, on-ice Officials should make every effort to review the electronic or paper game sheet to ensure the correct number of players and team personnel are captured. Additionally, any potential curfew times or other game nuances should also be captured in the Notes section of the game sheet.
- b. Following each game, on-ice Officials are to review the electronic or paper game sheet for accuracy.
  - i. Officials must check to ensure all penalties and codes are reported as called. If errors are found and/or additional penalties need to be added, the Official must email [stats@owha.on.ca](mailto:stats@owha.on.ca) with details as soon as possible and no later than 24 hours following the conclusion of the game. Only the OWHA is authorized to adjust or change the RAMP Electronic game sheet following the completion of the game.
  - ii. All Game Ejection, Major, Misconduct, Game Misconduct, Gross Misconduct, Match and Discrimination (Rule 11.4) penalties must be reported, with complete details surrounding the penalty circumstances, into the Notes section of the electronic game sheet or on the back of the white copy of the paper game sheet.

In addition, officials must submit a Game Report with complete details of these penalties. Game Reports are available through the [OWHA Website](#), select Officials, then select the appropriate Report to complete. All Game reports must be completed as soon as possible and no later than 24 hours following the conclusion of a game.

- iii. Incident Reports should also be made for any incidents, injuries, and/or unusual circumstances that occurred during the game that did not necessitate a penalty call. All reports must be submitted as soon as possible and no later than 24 hours following the conclusion of the game.

Any OWHA participant, who is not an on-ice Official involved in the game connected to the incident being reported, may report on unusual circumstances or incidents that the OWHA should be made aware of.



## 9. Suspension of Games

- a. All OWHA games should be completed whenever safely possible. At times, unexpected circumstances may necessitate the suspension of a hockey game. Full details of any suspended game must be reported via email to [stats@owha.on.ca](mailto:stats@owha.on.ca) as soon as possible and no later than 24 hours following the conclusion of the game.
- b. Where there is a possible curfew, it should be directly acknowledged by personnel from each team and noted on the game sheet. The curfew time shall be judged by a mutually agreed upon clock. If an Arena Manager terminates the availability of ice time, thereby suspending a game, this should be noted separately within the game sheet.

*The OWHA reserves the right to make decisions as deemed appropriate by it.*

## Section 3: Officiating Policies

### 1. Suspended Individuals

- a. Any Official who is suspended while participating as a Player or Team Official will be ineligible to officiate until the suspension is served. Carry-over suspensions, and suspensions which extend beyond playing eligibility will be reviewed individually by the OWHA.
- b. Any Official who is suspended as an Official will be ineligible to participate in any sanctioned hockey in any capacity, including as a Player or Team Official until the suspension is served.
- c. Any OWHA Official who has been suspended as an Official, Player, or Team Official with any Hockey Canada Member will be ineligible to officiate until the suspension is served. Carry-over suspensions, and suspensions which extend beyond playing eligibility will be reviewed individually by the OWHA Discipline Panel.

### 2. Family, Friends and Business Associates

- a. Officials shall not officiate any game in which a participating player or team Official is a family member, partner, close personal or business relation, or is currently a part of that division as a coach, manager or player. Officials are asked to declare to their local Officiating Coach and local assignor any potential conflict of interest through family, friendship or business.
- b. Officiating Coaches should not coach an official who is a close family member, partner or business relation, nor should they coach an official in a game where game participants and/or team staff fall into these categories. Any clarification or extenuating circumstances should be addressed with the OWHA at [refs@owha.on.ca](mailto:refs@owha.on.ca).

### 3. Tournament Participants

- a. Individuals will not be allowed to officiate in tournament categories in which they also participate as a Player or Team Official.
- b. Officiating Coaches may participate in a tournament as either an Official or as an Officiating Coach. Exceptions may be provided by contacting the OWHA at [refs@owha.on.ca](mailto:refs@owha.on.ca) where extenuating circumstances may require an exception.

### 4. Playdowns as an Official and Participant

- a. Officials who act as Players or Team Officials may not be scheduled to officiate Playdown games at the same age and category in which they participate as a Player or Team Official. For example, an Official who coaches U11A hockey may not be scheduled into Playdowns in U11A.

## 5. Discipline Hearings

- a. Officials should make every effort to attend discipline hearings when requested. Hearings are an important step in the dispute process for players, coaches, associations and Officials. Penalties assessed during the game in question will not be changed as a result of a hearing. The Official may be asked to clarify what was observed, why they assessed a penalty or penalties, and respond to pertinent questions from the Discipline Chair or Discipline Panel members. The role of the Official at a hearing is to provide context and information to support the Discipline Panel in making an informed decision on additional discipline, if required. Officials may contact the OWHA for assistance and support at [refs@owha.on.ca](mailto:refs@owha.on.ca).

## 6. Local Officiating Assignor / Local RIC Duties

- a. The primary duty of Local Officiating Assignors is to schedule qualified Officials to each OWHA game within their jurisdiction.
- b. Local Officiating Assignors are encouraged to collaborate with OWHA Officiating Coaches in their area to ensure Officials are capable to officiate at levels assigned.
- c. Local Officiating Assignors may remove Officials from future assignments when issues with attendance have repeatedly occurred.
- d. The Local Officiating Assignor must contact the OWHA related to **all** situations regarding an Official's conduct that may require investigation, discussion with the Official, or discipline.

## 7. Sanctioned vs Unsanctioned Games

- a. OWHA Officials receive benefits of membership in OWHA/Hockey Canada programming when officiating OWHA Sanctioned games.
- b. OWHA officials are not to participate in non sanctioned games or activities. If an individual chooses to participate in non-sanctioned activities, they are doing so as a private individual with no connection to the OWHA, no support from OWHA and with no benefits of sanctioned hockey. If an Official is unsure whether a game is sanctioned, the Official should not participate until sanctioning is confirmed through the OWHA office.

## 8. Social Networking

- a. Social networking is defined as communicating through on-line communities of people such as, but not limited to: Facebook, X, YouTube, TikTok, Snapchat, blogging, group chats, etc.
- b. The OWHA understands the importance of social networking, but we are also sensitive that inappropriate and unsupervised conduct may be detrimental to the welfare of the OWHA, and OWHA participants.



- c. The OWHA holds the entire OWHA community, including Executive Members, Managers, Coaches, Trainers, Players, Scouts, Support Staff, On and Off-Ice Officials, and others who participate in social networking to the same standards as it would with all forms of media, including television, radio, and print.
- d. Inappropriate social networking behaviour will not be tolerated. Communicating targeted and hurtful language may cause emotional pain and will be treated in the same manner as a match penalty for intent to cause physical harm which will result in the OWHA applying similar discipline outcomes.

*The OWHA reserves the right to make decisions as deemed appropriate by it.*



## Section 4: Discipline of OWHA Officials

1. All disciplinary matters must be reported to the OWHA office immediately and will be dealt by the OWHA.
2. The OWHA may issue discipline ranging from a warning letter to permanent suspension from the OWHA.

*The OWHA reserves the right to make decisions as deemed appropriate by it.*



## Appendix A: How to Become an Official

1. Create an account on the Hockey Canada Spordle website at [Hockey Canada Spordle](#).
2. All new Officials aged 18 or older must get a Vulnerable Sector Check from their local police department and submitting it via your HCR account through the [Screening Submission Portal](#) link prior to being able to register for a Clinic.
3. **NEW OFFICIALS** must complete the following:
  - a. [Introduction to Officiating](#) – This is a mandatory course that must be completed by all First Time Officials
  - b. [Respect In Sport](#) – This is a mandatory course that all officials regardless of level must complete and is a one-time course.
  - c. Once the above courses are completed, you will be eligible to register for the Entry Level Officials Clinic. These clinics are in-person, and you will be provided with locations and times as soon as they become available. Click the clinics below to register.
    - i. [Entry Level 1 \(14–15-year-olds\)](#)
    - ii. [Entry Level 2 \(16 – 17-year-olds\)](#)
    - iii. [Entry Level 2 \(18 and older\)](#)

**NOTE:** Please ensure that you register for the appropriate level based on your age group.

4. **RETURNING OFFICIALS** must complete the following components prior to attending an in-class clinic:
  - a. [Respect In Sport](#) – This is a mandatory course that all officials regardless of level must complete and is a one-time course, if you have already completed it, there is no need to re-do it.
  - b. All re-certifying officials must complete the online modules and successfully complete the National Certification exam.
    - i. [Re-Cert Level 1 \(ages 14-15\)](#)
    - ii. [Re-Cert Level 2 \(ages 16-17\)](#)
    - iii. [Re-Cert Level 2 \(18 and older\)](#)
    - iv. [Re-Cert Level 3](#)
    - v. [Re-Cert for Member High Performance \(formerly level 4 & 5\)](#)
    - vi. [Re-Cert for National High Performance \(formerly level 6\)](#)

**NOTE:** Please ensure that you register for the appropriate level based on your age group and previous certification level.



5. Attend an In-Person Officiating clinic.
6. Contact Local Officiating Assignor or local Officiating Coach.
7. Download RAMP Gamesheet App on your cell phone and create an account.

## Appendix B: Equipment

### Minimum Equipment Required to Officiate

- Large Black Duffel or Small Black Hockey Bag
- CSA Certified Black Helmet with Ear Coverings
- CSA Certified Half Visor
- Official Linesperson Jersey with OWHA and Hockey Canada Cresting (Jersey Must be Hockey Canada Approved Style, No NHL-Style Jerseys)
- Black Pants
- Skates
- BNQ Certified Neck Guard
- Whistle
- Red Arm Bands or Dedicated Jersey with Sewn-On Bands (Level 3 Officials & Up)

### Additional Recommended Equipment to Officiate

- Elbow Pads
- Shin Pads
- Shin Tights
- Girdle/Padded Base Layers
- Athletic Base Layer
- Off-Ice Warm Up Gear
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Whistle
- Small Note Pad with Pen/Pencil
- White Skate Laces

### Other Useful Items for Officials to Carry

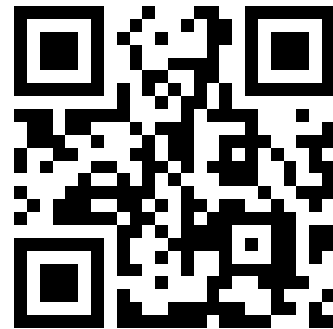
- Physical Rule Book
- Soft Measuring Tape
- Old Skate Laces/Small Zip Ties for Net Repairs
- Water Bottle
- Notebook and Pen/Pencil
- Helmet/Skate Repair Kit
- Hockey Tape (Clear and/or Stick Tape)
- Visor Cleaning Equipment (Cloth & Spray; Pledge Works Best)

## Appendix C: Links

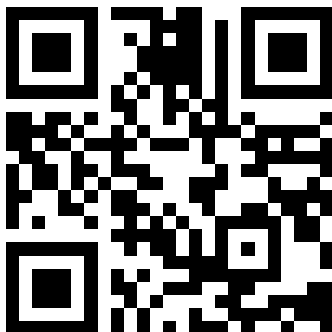
### OWHA Handbook



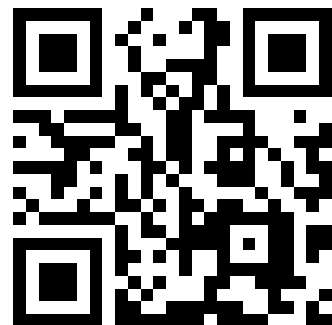
### Incident Report



### Game Report



### Match Penalty Report



### Injury Report



### Hockey Canada Spordle

