



October 26, 2020

TRAVEL UPDATE INCLUDING SCRIMMAGES AND GAMES

The NY Forward Guidelines Regarding Ice Hockey

The New York State Amateur Hockey Association continues to receive inquiries about playing games and scrimmages, and engaging in travel in connection with those ice hockey activities allowed by the State of New York. Ice Hockey activities are regulated under the State of New York “NY Forward” Guidelines, which includes amateur sports such as ice hockey. The Guidelines are found at the forward.NY.gov website. Under the Guidelines, ice hockey remains designated as a “higher risk” sport, with hockey games and scrimmages not permitted.

It also continues to be the understanding of the New York State Amateur Hockey Association that traveling outside the Region of the State of New York where the team is registered, and traveling outside of New York State to participate in hockey activities, may violate the Guidelines. This applies even if the activities are permitted in the state where the hockey is taking place. If teams or participants travel out of New York State, they would be subject to any applicable State of New York quarantine requirements, and may be subject to penalties by the State of New York or local governments, including local Departments of Health, if it is determined that the travel violated the Guidelines.

At this time, the New York State Amateur Hockey Association does not intend to take disciplinary action for participating in sanctioned activities in another Affiliate of USA Hockey unless the State of New York issues clearer directives on this subject.

The Governor’s Travel Restrictions

Questions have recently been raised concerning the Governor’s travel restrictions for “essential workers”, and for others who generally travel out-of-state. Essential workers is defined as persons employed by an entity included on the State of New York’s “Essential Business” list and persons employed as health care workers, first responders and similarly-situated health-related positions. The travel restrictions can be viewed at the coronavirus.health.ny.gov website, under the “covid-19-travel-advisory”. Hockey activities do not appear to be included under the travel restrictions for essential workers.

As noted, ice hockey travel is limited under the Guidelines, and it does not appear that the Governor’s travel restrictions provide any exception. The New York State Amateur Hockey Association cannot advise individuals or teams how their travel plans are impacted by the travel restrictions, but careful consideration and caution should be paid to complying with them. For example, although there is a provision in the restrictions permitting travel for “any individual passing through designated quarantine states for a limited duration (i.e., less than 24 hours) through the course of travel”, the restrictions





further state: “Examples of such brief passage include but are not limited to: stopping at rest stops for vehicles, buses, and/or trains; or lay-overs for air travel, bus travel, or train travel.” Again, hockey activities do not appear to be included under this passing-through-for-travel exception.

Efforts by the New York State Hockey Amateur Hockey Association

The New York State Amateur Hockey Association has been working closely and directly with senior policy makers at NY Forward in the Governor’s Office, to have ice hockey games and scrimmages allowed under the Guidelines. NY Forward is the State of New York’s planning task force that focuses on getting New Yorkers back to work, including recreation and other activities, without triggering renewed spread of the COVID-19 virus or overwhelming local hospital systems.

This work is difficult with much of the country experiencing a “second wave” of the virus, but we are energetically and diligently continuing our efforts for permission to have games and scrimmages allowed.

We will continue to keep the membership updated.

