



Return to Play Protocols

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SECTION 1: GENERAL OVERVIEW OF RETURN TO SPORT FOR OSHA MEMBERS

Ontario Sledge Hockey Association (OSHA) is fully committed to the health and safety of its members as we work towards returning to sport. **Due to the nature of their disability, some athletes will be considered higher risk for a more severe course of COVID-19.** As outlined in the COVID-19 Return to HP Sport Framework Document, athletes and support staff with medical conditions including respiratory or cardiac disease, hypertension, coagulopathies, diabetes, obesity, severe asthma, and immunosuppression due to disease, chronic condition or medication may be at increased risk of severe COVID-19 infection. Athletes that have concurrent conditions should consider consulting their primary care physician prior to returning to training environments and follow any medical guidance they have been given about ensuring their health and welfare.

It is important to remember that while mitigation measures outlined throughout this document can reduce the risk of COVID-19 infections, **they cannot completely eliminate the risk.** Clubs must review this document (and supporting resource tools) to determine whether they can implement a safe training environment while adhering to the OSHA Return to Sport guidelines. It is the responsibility of each club to encourage their members, particularly those with concurrent conditions, to undertake their own personal risk assessment and determine whether they are willing to return to sport as well. OSHA recognizes that many of their members and families are immune compromised and will therefore take a more cautious approach to return to play.

The following guidelines have been compiled from recommendations published by the Ontario Government, Ontario Health Authorities, and our National Sport Organization (Hockey Canada) and utilizing the guidelines and assessment tools presented by the National COVID-19 Return to High Performance Sport Task Force. These guidelines have also been created in consultation with the Provincial Sport Organization, Ontario Hockey Federation, specifically for para ice hockey. **All activities delivered by OSHA affiliated clubs must adhere to OSHA Return to Sport guidelines and to all federal, provincial, and municipality laws, regulations, by-laws and orders.** While the guideline outlined in this document will be reviewed and updated regularly as new information is presented, it is the club's responsibility to remain up to date on provincial and municipal government regulations to ensure a safe environment for all and to communicate this information with its members. The information in this document is not intended or implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. OSHA makes no representation and assumes no responsibility in respect of their information concerning COVID-19 as the circumstances are constantly changing, and any information on COVID-19 should be obtained from your Public Health Authority. A list of resources to help clubs stay up to date on these regulations can be found at the end of this document.

SECTION 2: RETURN TO SPORT FRAMEWORK

OSHA will be following a phased approach in its return to sport for para ice hockey. Clubs will operate their programming in accordance with the framework of the OSHA Return to Hockey Framework Stages, as well as the rules established by their local Public Health Unit and the facilities. In all stages, Hockey Canada Safety Protocols will be followed. At this time, this framework and supporting documentation is mainly focused on return to training (Stages 1 – 4). An additional section outlining game play restrictions and exhibition game scheduling will be added at a later date. At this time, there will be no league games or tournaments until Stage 8.

OSHA Stage	Ontario Gov't Stage	Outline	# of Participants	Est. Timeframe
Stage 1	Phase 2, Stage 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Off ice, individual training only Physical distancing in place 	Max 10 people	July – Aug 2020
Stage 2	Phase 2, Stage 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practices only on and off ice training Individual drills No physical contact Physical distancing in place 	Max 30 people (including staff/assistants)	Aug – Oct 2020
Stage 3	Phase 2, Stage 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practices only on and off ice training Individual drills No physical contact Physical distancing in place 3 on 3 drills permissible 	Max 30 people (including staff/assistants)	Nov 2020
Stage 4	Phase 2, Stage 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practices only on and off ice training Individual drills No physical contact Physical distancing in place 3 on 3 & 4 on 4 drills permissible 	Max 30 people (including staff/assistants)	Dec 2020
Stage 5	Phase 2, Stage 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practices on and off ice training Individual drills No physical contact Physical distancing in place 3 on 3, 4 on 4, & 5 on 5 drills permissible Inter Squad games 	Max 40 people (including staff/assistants)	Jan 2021
Stage 6	Phase 2, Stage 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practices on and off ice training Individual drills No physical contact Physical distancing in place 	Max 40 people (including staff/assistants)	Feb 2021

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 on 3, 4 on 4, & 5 on 5 drills permissible • Inter Squad Games OR Exhibition Games against the next closest Public Health Centres at the same competitive level 		
Stage 7	Phase 2, Stage 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practices on and off ice training • Individual drills • No physical contact • Physical distancing in place • 3 on 3, 4 on 4, & 5 on 5 drills permissible • Inter Squad Games OR Exhibition Games against the next 2 closest Public Health Centres at the same competitive level 	Max 40 people (including staff/assistants)	March 2021
Stage 8	Phase 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practices on and off ice training • Individual drills • No on ice physical distancing required • Games (with contact in divisions where it is allowed) • Tournaments 	Regular group sizes	Apr – Aug 2021

Additional Notes on the Return to Sport Framework:

- Timeframes are provided to give clubs an idea of what progressions will occur throughout the 2020-2021 season. Note these timeframes are an estimate at the time of publishing these guidelines and each stage may be extended or reverted back to at the discretion of OSHA.
- Number of participants is a maximum number outlined by OSHA for sanctioned programming, however, all participant numbers are dictated by the restrictions for gathering that have been established by the Ontario Government, local Public Health Unit, or facility. Maximum numbers are based on the largest ice surface 100x200 and should be adjusted accordingly for smaller ice surfaces and/or age and size of players.
- All off ice training sessions must be approved by OSHA prior to their implementation, for sanctioning and insurance purposes. Requests must be sent to Darren at cunliffe.darren@gmail.com at a minimum 5 days prior to the session for insurance to be confirmed.
- Clubs whose catchment is over multiple public health authorities will be regarded as one area when it comes time to run exhibition games.

PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

- For the 2020/2021 season there will be no try outs for teams. All players will play at the level they played at last season, unless they are moving up due to age restrictions

- Players can only participate on one team for the season
 - Ex. A player cannot practice/play for Sledge Team Ontario as well as their local club; they may only participate in one team's activities
 - Players cannot practice with more than one team within their own club; they can only train with the members on the roster submitted to OSHA COVID-19 Compliance Officer prior to the start of the first practice
 - Should the Province reach stage 4 ahead of the Schedule indicated in section 2, Players may resume normal activities which can include practicing with two teams and playing with for two teams: example playing with Home Club and Sledge Team Ontario or Home Club and the Canadian National Team.

SECTION 3: FACILITIES

It is the responsibility of each club to work with a facility representative to identify rules/regulations surrounding return to sport and solutions if those requirements are challenging for para ice hockey participants. Once determined, clubs should include this information in their Return to Sport plan so members are aware of what training sessions will look like at each facility. Some of the questions that clubs will want to ask facilities include:

- Physical distancing requirements and maximum number of individuals within facility
 - If participants require an assistant to help with a transfer in or out of the sledge but can leave the facility for the remainder of the practice, would you need to count that participant in your facility numbers
- Dressing room access and policies related to “come dressed”
 - If dressing rooms access is allowed, do they have a max number per room? If not, clubs should ask for sizing to determine how many para ice hockey athletes can fit in the room at one time while maintaining physical distancing
 - If this is enforced, what exceptions would the facility be willing to make if the athlete is unable to do so
- Entry/exit and re-entry rules
 - Ask how the facility is managing traffic flow and entries into different ice pads
- Parent/Assistant access
 - Is there a designated space within the facility where parents/assistants are able to wait?
 - If not, can the club designate a spot for assistants?
- Additional cleaning protocols/sanitization of dressing room, washrooms, etc.
 - Does the facility have a touch point map they can provide?
 - What is the cleaning timeframe for washrooms, particularly for accessible washrooms where athletes may be using grab rails frequently
- Scheduling timeframes and additional time required for para access on/off ice
 - Does the facility have strict timelines of when a user group must be off the ice and must be out of the facility? If so, how can those be adjusted to account for additional time for para ice hockey athletes

SECTION 4: OSHA COVID-19 COMPLIANCE OFFICERS AND CLUB REQUIREMENTS

OSHA has appointed two OSHA Executive Members (Darren Cunliffe and Dawn Desrosiers) to oversee compliance of OSHA's Return to Sport Guidelines. Each COVID-19 Compliance Officer will be responsible for approximately half the province and will work directly with clubs to ensure all required return to sport steps are completed prior to their first organized activity. **Note any non-implementation or non-compliance with the protocols outlined in this document nullifies insurance coverage so it is extremely important for all clubs to complete the following steps prior to organized activities.** OSHA has provided sample templates for the various requirements in order to assist its clubs in adhering to these guidelines and providing a safe environment for its members to return to sport.

Club Compliance Requirements: Before Resumption of Club Activities

Prior to the first organized activity, each club must:

1. Review the OSHA Return to Sport Guidelines and Hockey Canada's Safety Guidelines (link to document found in Appendix A)
2. Designate "Health Safety Officers" for both the club overall and within each team. The Health Safety Officers will be responsible for:
 - Completing the Sport Club Risk Mitigation and Assessment Tool prior to starting training programs to confirm risk assessment and mitigation strategies meet threshold to begin group training. Any changes to facility and provincial guidelines/recommendations will result in the assessment tool being updated
 - Developing club specific return to training plans that implement guidelines/recommendations outlined in this document and in Hockey Canada's Safety Guidelines
 - Complete the OSHA COVID-19 Club Attestation Form
 - Keep updated on all local/provincial health guidelines and work with facilities to comply with any municipality or local regulations
 - Communicate with athletes, coaches, volunteers, and assistants on any training restrictions, regulations, and recommendations
 - Confirm daily symptom screening and practice attendance tracking is occurring and maintain documentation
 - Ensure the club's COVID-19 Management Protocol is implemented if any cases of COVID-19 occur in the club's activities
3. Complete the Club Risk Assessment and Mitigation Checklist Excel Doc
4. Create a club-specific Return to Sport Plan to be reviewed by the club's assigned COVID-19 Compliance Officer. It is recommended that clubs write this plan to include general information on COVID-19, facility access information, and description of how programming will be delivered so the document can be distributed to its membership as well. Plans must include:
 - How the club will implement and track its health screening protocol – all individuals participating in the club affiliated activity must complete a COVID-19 screening before each training session and clubs must keep a log of all participants present at every training session for contact tracing

- An COVID-19 Management Protocol outlining the club's process if an individual becomes unwell with symptoms of COVID-19, if an individual is tested for COVID-19, and if an individual tests positive for COVID-19
5. Complete the COVID-19 Club Attestation Form and submit all documentation to the club's assigned COVID-19 Compliance Officer for review.

The documents outlined above, as well as sample COVID-19 Management Protocols, Daily Screening Forms and Practice Tracking Forms, can be found on the Return to Sport section of the OSHA website: <https://www.ontariosledge.com/>

Club Compliance Requirements: Club Programming Has Resumed

Once the club has been approved to resume programming, each club must:

- Submit a list of all scheduled practice dates, times, and location by email to OSHAacovid19@gmail.com. Any additions must be emailed to OSHAacovid19@gmail.com at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled practice.
- Keep a record of all daily symptom screening checks and practice tracking on file in a format that can be sent to OSHA when requested
- Communicate any adjustments to the club's Return to Sport plan to their designated COVID-19 Compliance Officer

Clubs are encouraged to hold an information session for their members to review the Return to Sport guidelines and answer questions prior to the start of the first training session.

Club Compliance Audits

Teams will be subjected to random compliance checks throughout the year to ensure the OSHA Return to Sport Guidelines and approved Club Return to Sport Plans are being implemented. These audits may include in-person observations by COVID-19 Compliance Officers and requests for completed daily symptom screening and practice tracking forms. Penalty for noncompliance is as follows:

- First offence: Written warning
- Second offence: 300.00 fine payable within two weeks of infraction date
- Third Offence: Suspension for the remainder of the 2020/2021 season

SECTION 5: PROGRAMMING GUIDELINES

The following section outlines programming guidelines for clubs to implement in their training sessions. As previously stated, clubs will need to use this framework in conjunction with the rules established by their local Public Health Unit and facilities.

Who should NOT attend practices?

As per Government Health regulations, the following individuals should NOT attend practice or training venues:

- Any person experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose, headache, or shortness of breath). If these symptoms begin while at a training venue the individual must leave immediately and contact their physician for advice on further management. The individual must also inform their club and/or personal coach. This person must receive clearance by their physician before returning to training and the training venue.
- Any person who receives a diagnosis of COVID-19. Individuals must comply with the current mandated self-isolation policy
- Any person who has been told to self-isolate at home
- Any person who lives in a home or has been in close contact with someone with symptoms of COVID-19.
- Any person who lives in a home or has been in close contact with someone who has been told to self-isolate at home.
- Any person who has arrived in Canada from outside of the country within the last 14 days as they are mandated to self-isolate and monitor for symptoms for 14 days upon their arrival.

Prior to Training Session

- Only registered participants (including athletes, coaches, sport assistants, pushers and volunteers) may attend the session. Clubs will be required to submit a club roster to OSHA prior to the first session. Drop INS or scheduled Try it's will not be allowed at this time.
- All participants must complete a daily screening questionnaire prior to each training session. It is recommended clubs work with facilities to designate a screening area for the coach/club representative to confirm the screening has been completed prior to the participant entering the dressing room/ice pad. Clubs should consider pre-practice administration through online platforms to limit facility access.
- All participants must wear at best a non-medical grade face mask at all times within the facility, except when athletes are on-ice training. It is recommended that a zip lock bag or personal bag is used to store the mask when it is not in use.
- Athletes must arrive to training as fully dressed as possible to reduce time at the facility
- It is recommended that athletes from different families do not travel together to practices at this time unless they are from the same social circle. If athletes from different families must travel together, it is recommended that everyone wear a mask while in the vehicle
- Athletes are recommended to sanitize their equipment before each practice. This includes sledges, sticks, mouth guards, helmets/faceguards, gloves, etc. Manual wheelchair users are recommended to sanitize their day chair as well. It is also recommended to wash jerseys and all other outer layer clothing after each session.
- All participants should wash their hands or use hand sanitizer before and after each session.
- All participants must maintain physical distancing measures at all times (both on and off the ice)

During Training Session

- Clubs and coaches should minimize the number of individuals touching practice related equipment such as cones, pucks, pylons, etc. It is recommended that one person is assigned to practice set up/take for each training session. This equipment must be sanitized before and after the training session.
- It is highly recommended that any equipment adjustments/maintenance to the sledge/sticks must be done by the athlete or their assistant – coaches should not assist with equipment adjustment at this time.
- All participants must bring their own individually labelled water bottles. Participants will not handle other player's water bottles
- All staff on the bench must wear a mask at all times.
- No expelling water or liquids onto the ice, on players, or in the direction of any players
- No spitting onto the ice, on players, or in the direction of any players
- Players cannot touch pucks with their hands.
- Teams should appoint one person who is responsible for up righting any player that cannot get up on their own. They must have PPE (mask and gloves) on at all times and must change the gloves after each time they have contact with an athlete. If the athlete makes contact with the mask, it must also be changed.

After Training Session

- Athletes should leave the ice surface in an orderly manner, observing physical distancing where possible. Once off the ice, athletes should immediately put on their mask
- The same person designated to set up the practice equipment should also clean up the equipment. This includes sanitizing all items.
- Exit directions will differ with each facility and players/parents must be made aware of exiting process prior to the practice
- All participants must avoid any loitering in the dressing room or hallways of the facility – participants are expected to leave the facility immediately after the training session. This could include leaving the facility with some equipment on and removing it once you are at your vehicle.
- There will be no use of showers at this time

SECTION 6: SPORT ASSISTANTS, PUSHERS, AND EQUIPMENT

Sport Assistants

- If an athlete requires physical assistance in order to train (ex. transferring into the sledge, taping, dressing, etc.), it is recommended that the assistant be an individual from the same household or social bubble – no additional safety precautions between the athlete and assistant are required.
- To reduce participant numbers, only 1 assistant should be permitted per athlete and only if absolutely necessary in order for the athlete to train.
- If the athlete is unable to bring someone from their household or bubble, additional guidelines for the assistant are as follows:
 - The assistant must be the same person each week and can only work with one athlete/family
 - The assistant must wear PPE (gloves and mask) while working with the athlete
 - All non-essential contact should be avoided
 - All assistants must go through the same screening process and follow the same guidelines as the athlete

Pushers

- It is recommended that each athlete have their own pusher from their family or social bubble
- One pusher may push more than one member from the same family
- Pushers cannot have contact with any other players on the ice (i.e. positioning them, up righting a player, etc.)
- If the athlete is unable to bring a pusher from their household or bubble, additional guidelines for the pusher are as follows:
 - The pusher must be the same person each week and can only work with one athlete/family
 - The pusher must wear PPE (gloves and mask) while working with the athlete
 - All non-essential contact should be avoided
 - All pushers must go through the same screening process and follow the same guidelines as the athlete

Equipment

- Ensure that all equipment is cleaned before and after use.
- Only players, their family or people in their bubble can assist them with removal of their equipment, including carrying it and putting it into their vehicles
- If a manual wheelchair user does not require an assistant to get into their sledge, teams should appoint one person responsible for moving day chairs to a designated area in-between transfers. They must have PPE (mask and gloves) on at all times and must change the gloves after each time they have contact with an athlete's chair. The other option is mask only and to sterilize their hands between each chair touch
- Each team should ensure their first aid kit is equipped with masks and gloves in the case of an injury or situation where multiple individuals need to assist someone without being able to maintain physical distancing

APPENDIX A: IMPORTANT LINKS

Hockey Canada Return to Play Safety Guidelines

- <https://www.hockeycanada.ca/en-ca/exclusive/return-to-hockey/plans/safety>

OSHA Return to Sport Hub

- <https://www.ontariosledge.com>
- Hub to Return to Sport resources associated with OSHA, including the following documents:
 - COVID-19 Return to HP Sport Framework Document
 - Club Risk Assessment and Mitigation Checklist Excel Doc
 - Sample COVID-19 Management Protocol Outline
 - Sample Daily Symptom Screening Form
 - Sample Participant Tracking Form

Government of Ontario COVID-19 Hub

- <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/>
- Main Hub in Ontario for information on COVID-19, including self-assessment and assessment centre locator, information on symptoms and treatment recommendations, access to PDF posters, and current updates on reopening phases of the province

Local Public Health Units

- <http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/system/services/phu/locations.aspx>
- Contact information for the various public health units

Self-Assessment Tool

- <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/>
- Direct link to online self-assessment tool

Telehealth Ontario

- <https://www.ontario.ca/page/get-medical-advice-telehealth-ontario>
- Information on Telehealth Ontario, a free confidential service you can call to get health advice or information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
 - Toll Free Number: 1-866-797-0000
 - Toll-free TTY: 1-866-797-0007

COVID-19 Mental Health Resource Document

- http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/resources_ontarians_experiencing_mha.pdf
- Outlines various resources for Ontarians experiencing mental health and addictions issues during the pandemic

Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces

- <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/cleaning-disinfecting-public-spaces.html>
- Overview of tips for cleaning and disinfecting public spaces, as well as a link to approved list of disinfectants and hand sanitizers for use against COVID-19