

# Return to Play Standards

## Michigan Amateur Hockey Association 2020-21

February 12, 2021

The Michigan Amateur Hockey Association (MAHA) initiated the 2020-21 Return to Play Standards as a protocol to ensure the safety and well-being of all ice hockey participants and spectators, while allowing ice rinks to safely rent ice to our members. Furthermore, in collaboration with the U.S. Ice Rink Association and U.S. Figure Skating, USA Hockey published a comprehensive '[Returning to the Rinks](#)' document containing additional guidelines and recommendations successfully put into practice by many of our USA Hockey affiliates nationwide. Collectively, this provides us a path to safely operate while minimizing risks tied to COVID-19.

On February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021 the Michigan Department of Health & Human Services (MDHHS) issued its [Gatherings and Face Mask Order](#) under section 2253 of the Public Health Code. For the purposes of organized sports, additional guidance was provided by the MDHHS [Interim Guidance for Athletics](#) document, issued on February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The February 4<sup>th</sup> Epidemic Order and the February 7<sup>th</sup> Interim Guidance for Athletics document were put into effect under statutory authority that was not the subject of the October 2, 2020 Michigan Supreme Court Opinion.

**NOTE:** This policy is not intended to replace local and state government orders or safety policies and procedures put in place at your ice rink facility. This policy is not intended for the operation of other rink entities including, but not limited to: concession stands, open skating sessions, birthday parties or other higher-risk in-rink activities. You should consult your ice rink facility regarding those activities.

## MAHA

- All participants in MAHA sanctioned on-ice activity must be registered with USA Hockey for the 2020-21 season
- The MAHA requires that all associations, teams, players, coaches, officials and volunteers maintain full compliance with all SafeSport policies, including mandatory training and certification
- The MAHA requires that all coaches, employees, volunteers, and other adults involved must complete an online Concussion Awareness training program, with re-certification every three years as required by State law
- The MAHA will provide educational materials, on the signs/symptoms and consequences of concussions, to each athlete and parent/guardian and obtain signed acknowledgements that the information was received.
- The MAHA will not prevent teams from traveling out-of-state for competition; however, the MAHA requires that those teams complete the Interstate Travel Notification Form to support COVID-19 contact tracing
- The MAHA requires that all teams, traveling out-of-state for hockey activity, will adhere to all local and state government guidelines for youth sports participation in that state. Likewise, the MAHA will require all out-of-state teams, entering Michigan for hockey activity, to adhere to all local and state government guidelines for youth sports participation in Michigan
- The MAHA will initiate disciplinary action without delay for any team, association, volunteer and/or tournament host that is NOT in compliance with USA Hockey policies, MAHA policies, and the laws, rules and policies established by the local government and health authorities

## ASSOCIATIONS

- Potential Risk Factors & Prevention
  - Players or coaches with any COVID-19 risk factors or illnesses SHOULD NOT participate in any on-ice activity
  - Any player, coach or spectator exhibiting signs or symptoms of an illness SHOULD NOT be in the facility at any point
  - Any player, coach or spectator awaiting results from a COVID-19 test SHOULD NOT be in the facility until a negative result has been confirmed



## ASSOCIATIONS (continued)

- Preparation for Emerging COVID-19 Cases:
  - All teams should designate a person who will be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns, as well as notifying all applicable parties, regarding positive COVID-19 cases. Contact information for these individuals should be accessible to all coaches, volunteers and families
  - All associations should designate a person or group, to serve as a liaison with your ice rink facility, as well as notifying all applicable parties if a positive test is confirmed
  - Each association and team should have an emergency plan for any positive COVID-19 cases that arise
  
- If a Positive COVID-19 Test is Confirmed:
  - Pause team activities until appropriate contact tracing, reporting to all applicable parties, and consultation with local health officials on next steps has been achieved. (This includes any “out-of-town” and/or “out-of-state” events that may occur within this timeframe.)
  - Immediately report to all applicable parties\*
    - Association Leadership
    - Rink Management
    - Michigan Amateur Hockey Association (MAHA)
    - Local Health Department

\*Confidentiality of the individual must be maintained in accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and any other corresponding state laws

  - Follow the guidance of the Health Department, regarding “close contacts.”
    - ‘Close contact’ is defined as someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period, starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated. (*Updated December 2020, CDC*)
    - “Close contacts” may have to quarantine for 14 days – follow Health Department guidance
      - Individuals exposed to COVID-19 may end quarantine after 10 days (without a test) if the person remains asymptomatic (*Updated December 2020, CDC*)
      - Individuals exposed to COVID-19 may end quarantine after 7 days if the person remains asymptomatic, and tests negative for COVID-19 (*Updated December 2020, CDC*)
  - As a courtesy, it is recommended that you notify any teams that shared space with the infected participant over the previous 14 days, and notify any teams/opponents scheduled to practice or compete with your team within the upcoming 14 days
    - Teams should not be penalized for forfeiting games due to COVID-19 concerns
  
- Arena Protocols
  - Associations should familiarize themselves with local arena protocols, and provide advanced communication of all protocols to membership. Some of these procedures will include:
    - cleaning/disinfecting practices and schedules
    - online payment options
    - building entrance and exit routes
    - arrival and exit timing
    - locker room availability
    - social distancing measures
    - spectator policy
    - use of face coverings/masks in facility
    - screening required before entry



## RINK OPERATORS

- Rink operators are expected to maintain compliance with operational guidelines, as summarized in the following documents:
  - [MDHHS Emergency Order – Gatherings and Face Mask Order \(February 4, 2021\)](#)
    - Gathering Restrictions (Sections 2-4)
    - Organized Sports Gathering Restrictions (Section 6)
    - Face Mask Requirements at Gatherings / Exceptions (Sections 7-8)
    - Contact Tracing Requirements for Particular Gatherings (Section 9)
  - [USA Hockey’s ‘Returning to the Rinks’ Document \(October 2020\)](#)

## MEMBERSHIP

- Inform your team, and/or association, designated COVID-19 contact of any participant(s) testing positive, someone in your household testing positive, or any instances of exposure to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19
  - If you, or members of your household, are awaiting results from a COVID-19 test, please stay home until a negative result has been confirmed
  - If you, or members of your household, are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, please stay home for a minimum of 10 days since the first appearance of symptoms
    - [When is it safe to leave home, if you have symptoms of COVID-19 or live with someone who does?](#)
- Per the [MDHHS Interim Guidance for Athletics \(February 7, 2021\)](#), it is recommended that spectators are limited to two per athlete. The total capacity of stadiums and arenas may be limited by local or state regulation. Find the latest state regulation at [www.michigan.gov/coronavirus](http://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus).
- Members / families are encouraged to use, support and promote risk mitigation strategies to minimize the potential spread of COVID-19. [The USA Hockey: Strategies for Mitigating Risk \(December 2020\)](#) document recommends the following risk mitigation strategies for all stakeholders to promote health and safety. We’re in this together and it’s imperative we follow these recommendations to ensure hockey has the best chance to be played this season:

## ON-ICE GUIDELINES

- Players need to maintain 6 feet of separation whenever possible during practices. Coaches should be promoting social distancing on-ice, while keeping players active and engaged at all times
- Per the [MDHHS Emergency Order – Gatherings and Face Mask Order \(February 4, 2021\)](#), facial coverings are required in hockey. This includes athletes and coaches, at all times during indoor active participation and all times during indoor non-active participation.
  - MDHHS Emergency Order – *Gatherings and Face Mask Order* (February 4, 2021) defines facial coverings as a tightly woven cloth or other multi-layer absorbent material that closely covers an individual’s mouth and nose. The following are not prohibited by the MDHHS Emergency Order – *Gatherings and Face Mask Order* (February 4, 2021):
    - Traditional cloth / fabric masks (worn properly, covering nose & mouth)
    - Neck gaiters (worn properly, covering nose & mouth)
    - Sports masks (worn properly, covering nose & mouth)
    - [CCM Game-On Face Masks](#) \*
    - [Bauer Concept III Face Shield \(with Bauer Splash Guard applied\)](#) \*
  - **NOTE:** A clear plastic “bubble” hockey shield DOES NOT ALONE meet the requirement of a facial covering. It must be accompanied by either a cloth / fabric facial covering or a “splash guard” covering the air holes at the bottom of a plastic “bubble” shield. It is recommended that cloth and fabric facial coverings be worn in addition to a ‘splash’ or ‘spit’ guard.



## ON-ICE GUIDELINES (continued)

\* Any facial covering attached to a helmet face mask, other than those made by a helmet manufacturer, may affect the HECC certification of the product. ([Click here for a full statement from the Hockey Equipment Certification Council](#))

- Consistent with current Epidemic Orders, facial coverings shall be properly worn by coaches, players, trainers, game event staff, on-ice officials, off-ice officials, and spectators at all times during games
  - Players will be sent back to the locker room if they come to the bench without a facial covering
  - A Game Misconduct penalty will be assessed if players enter on-ice competition without a facial covering. This will be noted on the scoresheet as a “mask violation” under Rule 304
- Coaches must maintain physical distancing between players on bench during game play, stoppages, intermissions, etc. Space outside the bench area should be utilized to accommodate social distancing
  - No pre-game or post-game handshakes will be conducted. Stick salutes will be utilized
  - No pre-game or post-game huddles or team pile-ups on the ice
- Any observed violation of facial covering protocols by a team will result in an immediate 3-game summary suspension for the Head Coach, assessed by the MAHA
  - Individual suspensions will also be instituted for non-compliance of facial covering protocols
  - Associations whose member(s) is found in violation, will receive one warning. Additional violations within the association will result in immediate disciplinary action
  - There are no provisions in the MDHHS Emergency Order – *Gatherings and Face Mask Order* (February 4, 2021) for a medical exception or waiver. This is not a MAHA regulation, and thus the MAHA has no legal authority to waive or modify this Emergency Order from the Michigan Department of Health & Human Services (MDHHS).
  - Rapid testing will not be made available to participants, as an alternative to complying with facial covering protocols. Per the [MDHHS Interim Guidance for Athletics \(February 7, 2021\)](#), athletes in contact sports must wear a facial covering at all times, unless the governing body determines it is unsafe to do so and agrees to follow the testing protocols.

## OUT-OF-STATE TRAVEL NOTIFICATION

The Michigan Amateur Hockey Association (MAHA) must prioritize the safety and well-being of its participants. With this in mind, The MAHA recommends that all teams attempt to minimize their out-of-state travel for competition during the 2020-21 season. All teams traveling outside of Michigan are advised to adhere to local and state government guidelines, as well as CDC regulations, as part of their planning process. Effective immediately, the Michigan Amateur Hockey Association has introduced a mandatory Out-Of-State Travel Notification that all teams are required to complete, before registering for an out-of-state tournament or event. This allows the MAHA to carefully monitor where teams may be traveling for the purposes of contact tracing. In addition, the MAHA can provide critical updates to teams if local, and/or state government guidelines determine the trip would be inadvisable.

## ADULT HOCKEY

Adults will be expected to follow local government guidelines, including the above, as indicated in the [MDHHS Emergency Order – Gatherings and Face Mask Order \(February 4, 2021\)](#)



# **Additional Links & Information**

For more information, we encourage you to visit the following sites:

## **LOCAL RESOURCES – COVID-19**

[Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

[State of Michigan – COVID-19 Updates](#)

[Michigan Department of Health & Human Services](#)

## **ICE HOCKEY – NEWS AND UPDATES**

[USA Hockey](#)

[Michigan Amateur Hockey Association](#)

[Michigan High School Athletic Association](#)

## **USA HOCKEY AFFILIATES – KEY CONTRIBUTORS**

[Minnesota Hockey](#)

[Massachusetts Hockey](#)

## **CORONAVIRUS & YOUTH SPORTS**

[The Aspen Institute’s Project Play](#)

