



October 7, 2020

Dear USA Hockey Family:

We hope this finds you and your loved ones well and enjoying the Fall. It's been a challenging time for all of us navigating our way through the pandemic, but the positive attitude of the hockey community has certainly been inspiring.

PROTECTING EACH OTHER

With the 2020-21 season getting up and running in many places across the country, we wanted to take the chance to reinforce the *importance of following local and state guidelines related to the COVID-19 pandemic*. As a whole, our hockey community has done a terrific job in this regard, but we do get some reports of people not following guidelines. It's important we all do our part and continue to make sure we wash our hands regularly, sanitize equipment, social distance and wear masks (and wear them properly) according to the guidelines.

To help ensure everyone has access to the benefits our sport provides – including physical, social and mental – we must remain vigilant in our efforts to minimize the opportunity for the spread of the virus in our hockey family. We understand that conditions and regulations vary across the country, and while we know frustrations exist, let's continue to work together for the good of all.

TO OUR ADVANTAGE

While we know that there are no activities that are risk free as we navigate this pandemic, there are some key factors within our sport that contribute to safety. Consider:

- Hockey players are covered in equipment head to toe (unlike most other sports).
- Ice rinks have significant HVAC systems to regularly circulate fresh air into the facility.
- USA Hockey provides a controlled environment with players having to register and those players rostered on a team. It is known exactly who is on the ice; groups are together for the season; and there is no co-mingling.
- Studies show players are within a six-foot radius of another player for less than three minutes per game. Players are on average on "immediate proximity" (actual contact with another player) for under two seconds per incident.
- With the significant size of the playing surface and facilities, there are responsible ways forward to conduct the sport keeping social distancing and hygiene at the forefront.

MATERIALS TO HELP

In conjunction with input from a wide group of stakeholders, including medical professionals, affiliates, and our rinks partners, among others, USA Hockey has published *Return to the Rinks Guidelines* and *Mitigating Risks Recommendations*, along with other resources, to assist programs across the country in safely returning to the sport in relation to COVID-19. You can find all of our resources related to COVID-19 online at usahockey.com/playersafety.

Yours in hockey,

Jim Smith
President

Pat Kelleher
Executive Director

