



## **MAHA RETURN TO THE ICE GUIDELINES & RECOMMENDATIONS**

August 3, 2020

The following document is to provide “Return to Play” guidelines for the Sport of Ice Hockey for Montana Amateur Hockey Association (MAHA). It also is to provide general information regarding COVID-19 and its impact. The information included is to be applied with facility mandated rules and requirements, along with the most current Local, State and Federal guidelines related to the containment and spreading of COVID-19.

Over the last several months, America has responded to a global pandemic caused by COVID-19 in unprecedented ways. It has changed nearly every aspect of our life. COVID-19 is a virus that can spread through (but not limited to) close human to human contact, coming in contact surfaces having the virus on it, and through respiratory droplets expectorated when a person sneezes, coughs or speaks.

This document should not be considered as medical or expert advice to participate in any activity. Rely on this information at your own risk and consult with the most up-to-date recommendations from Public Health officials. Consult with your own qualified healthcare providers or other advisors about any specific issues of circumstances you might have.

### **ICE RINKS OPENING FOR BUSINESS**

MAHA has teams that participate from all over the State. It is likely that Ice Rink facilities may not be open or have the same protocols at the same time in each of these cities.

- Verify that a facility is authorized to operate by meeting Local and State requirements.
- Prepare in advance before entering an ice rink. Check the facility or local association’s website or call directly for participation instructions. We hope that Local Associations will post these on their websites.
- Observe and adhere to facility signage containing COVID-19 related instructions for spectators and participants.

## GUIDELINES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

MAHA has established these guidelines and recommendations to serve as resource for its Associations and participants for when ice rinks begin to re-open, while continuing to support COVID-19 mitigation efforts. These guidelines do not supersede Federal, State and Local requirements.

## ASSOCIATIONS & SANCTIONED LEAGUES

All Local Associations that participate in MAHA and Sanctioned Leagues should develop their own plan for returning to the rink, which should conform to all Government requirements.

Please click on the link for Montana Government information and State directives pertaining to COVID <https://covid19.mt.gov/>.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS FOR PLAYERS, PARENTS & COACHES

1. All participants must be USA Hockey registered for the 2020-21 season to participate in any MAHA sanctioned on-ice activity.
2. Players, Officials and Coaches with any risk factors or illnesses should not participate in any on-ice activity. Any players, coaches or spectators exhibiting symptoms or signs of an illness should not be in the facility at any point.
3. Players should arrive at the rink no more than 15 minutes before the start of on-ice activities, and not enter the ice rink until 15 minutes prior to your on-ice scheduled time.
4. Ice Rinks and your local association should manage participant movement between sessions so to maintain acceptable social distancing.
5. Players ages 11 and older should be dropped off at the rink, and picked up afterward. Their parents/guardians should not be in the arena. Players aged 10 and under are allowed one parent/guardian in the rink to help with any equipment needs, however, once the player is on the ice, the parent/guardian shall leave the ice rink until needed at the conclusion of the on-ice session. We do not recommend siblings that are not playing enter the facility.
6. Tethered mouth guards are highly recommended to limit players taking them in/out of their mouths both on and off the ice.
7. Handshakes after the game should be eliminated and instead teams should consider alternative ways to wave or acknowledge opponents. Example: Possibly line up on blue lines and do a stick lift. Coaches and officials will agree on the post-game procedure before the game.
8. Families should provide coach/team manager with accurate contact information in the event of emergency while the player is at the arena.
9. Whenever possible, players should use the restroom at home prior to leaving for the rink in an effort to limit bathroom use at the facility.
10. Players should arrive to the arena fully dressed with the exception of skates (coming in to the arena with skate guards on is ideal) helmets, and gloves. Exceptions may be made for goalies, who may need to put on additional equipment at the rink.
11. Players should be bringing their own rehydration liquids to the rink in clearly marked or labeled containers with the player's identity. Players should NOT plan on refilling their containers at the rink. Players should keep a spare water bottle in their bag in case they forget one as there should

not be any team or shared water bottles. These should be washed by parents/guardians after every practice/game.

12. No on or off ice interaction (socializing, team meetings, dryland activities) should occur following the conclusion of practice. Players should remove skates and helmets and leave the premises within 15 minutes of the end of practice.
13. Parents/Guardians must be made aware of the time when the players will be done. The parents or person assigned to pick up players at the arena must be punctual. Players should not have to wait for a ride.
14. Maintaining Social Distancing, frequent washing of hands or using hand sanitizer, and cleaning of equipment between uses are important methods in mitigating the spread of COVID-19.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS FOR CLUBS & LEAGUES

1. Prior to the first on-ice session, coaches and/or association leaders should host a Video Webinar to explain procedures to parents, and to answer any questions.
2. Coaches should be as prepared as possible to ensure complete utilization of the allowed ice time.
3. Each association and team should have an emergency plan for any positive outbreak within the team, association or other users of a Facility.
4. Each association and team should have an alert plan to notify association members and anyone else who may have been exposed following any positive outbreak within team, association or community.
5. Dryland activities inside the arena are not advised.
6. Safesport policies will continue to be in effect in all phases. There should always be a minimum of two adults at every on-ice event, and there should be no unsupervised one-on-one interaction between a player and a coach.
7. Players need to maintain as much separation as possible. Whenever possible, coaches should be promoting social distancing on the ice, while recognizing that there may be times of close contact by players.
8. Avoid using player benches during practice when possible, and develop recommendations for the players when they are on the bench during game play.
9. Coaches should be keeping players active and engaged at all times. Players should not leave the ice during a practice unless absolutely necessary.
10. On-Ice Instructor personnel should be limited, as per the Phase Guidelines. Special Instructors (ie. Goalie Coach) may use as needed and subject to all other Guidelines.
11. Drills should be age appropriate and require limited to no contact.
12. Coaches should avoid talking face-to-face with players.
13. Coaches and spectators are required to wear masks (this may change per most current State requirements). Players should wear masks entering and exiting the facility, until they put on/off their helmet wherever possible.
14. Prior to the completion of the ice time, players should be excused from the rink one by one and through different exit points of the rink. Do not ask players to participate in picking up pucks or other equipment from the ice.
15. All equipment and locker rooms should be cleaned between different teams/groups.

## MAHA TSL GAME PLAY – WORK IN PROGRESS

TSL game play requirements are currently under consideration as COVID-19 restrictions are constantly changing. MAHA is considering multiple factors in regard to MAHA TSL Games and Tournaments, many of these factors may or may not affect the playing rules for the TSL. MAHA will announce the TSL game play requirements no later than Labor Day weekend.

#### OUT OF STATE COMPETITION

1. MAHA discourages any MAHA teams to travel out of State for competition until January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021.
2. MAHA discourages any MAHA Association to schedule competitions at their local rink with teams from outside Montana until January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021.
3. Any player or MAHA team that willingly travels out of State for competition, or brings an out of State team to Montana for competition is doing so at their own risk. If by chance a player tests positive for COVID-19 after playing a team from outside Montana, then that player or team could face the possibility of not being allowed a medical waiver for MAHA TSL game requirements, therefore putting said player or team in jeopardy of not being eligible to participate in MAHA TSL State Tournaments.
4. MAHA will continuously review the COVID-19 status around the country and in Canada and make an announcement at the end of December regarding the MAHA stance on out of state competition.

The “MAHA RETURN TO THE ICE Guidelines and Recommendations” is subject to change as the need and regulatory requirements demand.

#### ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOURCES

As previously stated, this document is not intended or implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Your child’s participation in any sport, and in particular, organized amateur hockey under the auspices of USA Hockey and the AAHA, is a personal choice for all parents and/or guardians. Exposure to COVID-19 is possible, even using the most extreme caution. Information regarding COVID-19 is constantly changing. We strongly encourage our hockey families, coaches, officials and volunteer and paid administrators to stay current on latest developments and information on COVID-19.

Please see the following links below for additional reference.

USA Hockey - <https://www.usahockey.com/playersafety>

Montana State Directives and Information

<https://covid19.mt.gov/>

CDC Considerations for Youth Sports -

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/youth-sports.html>

Montana High School Association Website – <https://www.mhsa.org/>