



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The following questions were received during Minnesota Hockey's Return to Play webinar on December 16. Answers are based on guidance and clarification received as of December 18. Minnesota Hockey will continue to communicate updates as they become available. For the latest COVID-19 information and protocols, visit www.minnesotahockey.org/covid19.

Activities Up to January 4

Is a recording of the latest Minnesota Hockey Return to Play webinar available?

Yes, the recording has been posted on the Minnesota Hockey YouTube channel and is available [here](#). Additional information and clarification has been secured since the webinar occurred. In the case of any conflicting responses between the webinar and this document, this document will take precedence.

How firm is the Jan. 4 date? Some arenas took their ice out and need time to reinstall it.

While we must acknowledge there are no guarantees in a pandemic, we are considering it a fixed date based on how it's referenced in the Executive Order and encourage associations to make plans to begin practice that date.

If our arena intends to allow private rentals prior to Jan. 4, when can that start? What are the guidelines that must be followed and do associations have any liability for those?

Arenas have been given permission to open on December 19 if they choose. They must follow the guidance for Gyms, Studios, Fitness Centers and Similar Facilities provided in the [Executive Order](#) and explained in detail [here](#).

Could you explain what's allowed in terms of outdoor activities from now until Jan. 4?

While Minnesota Hockey cannot sanction outdoor practices or events until January 4, there are outdoor activities allowed as per the [Executive Order](#).

Will MH be requesting funding from the State to support lost revenue faced by youth hockey associations?

We have been in contact with state representatives on this topic and will continue to explore this as a way to support our affiliates.

Return to Play - Practice Only - January 4

When will Minnesota Hockey's Return to Play Guidelines come out?

Minnesota Hockey has announced a set of rules, which were approved in a special Board of Directors meeting, that will go into effect on January 4. They are available [here](#).

Minnesota Hockey is expecting additional guidance from MDH soon and will share our complete updated guidelines as quickly as possible after that is available.



Under the new MH rules, will small bags be allowed for players to carry in skates, gloves and helmet?

The Minnesota Hockey rule, as voted on by the Board of Directors, does not allow players to bring any type of bag into the facility. While we understand the desire to have a small bag to carry these items, experiences this summer and fall have shown players are capable of carrying the items in without a bag, and that allowing any type of bag gradually erodes the purpose of the rules which is to force players to come dressed and eliminate gatherings before and after ice times.

Can individual arenas and associations be stricter on entry/exit times from facilities?

Yes. Associations always have the option to be stricter than Minnesota Hockey and USA Hockey rules.

Could you clarify the spectator rule? What is the benefit considering the size and space in hockey arenas? Will it be in place for games? If it is required for games, will someone be allowed to stream the games? What about injuries or health conditions? What about game officials?

The rules passed by the Board of Directors states no spectators will be permitted in arenas during Phase 1, with the exception of one parent allowed for Mites/8U and below. A maximum of two people (one per team) may be allowed to live stream games.

It's important to note this rule intentionally denotes Phase 1, meaning the initial return to play. Minnesota Hockey intends to evaluate this rule as we progress into later phases of our return to play. No decision has been made on if it will apply when games are allowed. However, the Board of Directors felt it was necessary to include a provision for streaming the games in case the no spectator rule is deemed necessary when games begin.

People fulfilling the duties of game officials are not considered spectators and are unaffected by this rule. However, the number of game officials must abide by Minnesota Hockey's Return to Play Guidelines.

Further, it is understood by the board there are players with pre-existing medical conditions in which parents must be in close proximity during play. In those instances, parents should communicate in advance with their coach and local association board to receive an exception.

Will there be rules for the number of people on the ice or pod size once practices can resume on Jan. 4?

We do expect there to be guidance on pod sizes, but the size of those is unknown at this time. We hope to have more details by December 23.

Will scrimmages be allowed in practices starting Jan. 4?

This is unknown at this time. We do expect to have more details on this when the timeline for games is determined.



Will players be required to wear a mask on the ice when play resumes? If required, would face shields be allowed in place of masks?

This is unknown at this time. The current guidance for gyms, fitness centers and similar facilities does include a requirement to wear a mask while exercising. It's unclear if that same guidance will be applied to sports.

It's unknown if face shields would be acceptable in that situation. In Massachusetts, where masks are required while playing hockey, face shields such as the Bauer Concept 3 Splash Guard have not been deemed acceptable, but the CCM "Game On" mask has been approved.

Will a positive test on a team involved in a game require the quarantine of that team and then opposing team? This seemed to change in November.

The Minnesota Department of Health has instructed us this practice will continue upon resuming play. Their [latest sports guidance](#) provides insight into their reasoning for this policy, stating the threshold for close contact in sports is much lower than in social settings due to intensity of play, face-to-face or physical contact, and length of play. The document also states it may only take a brief face-to-face contact in sports to expose a player to COVID-19.

The Minnesota Department of Health announced new guidelines for quarantines that will be complicated for associations to manage. Will Minnesota Hockey have recommendations in place for those?

Minnesota Hockey will be updating its Guidelines for Managing Positive COVID-19 Cases with the new quarantine guidelines and will continue to refer on MDH and local public health on quarantine recommendations.

MDH provided insight on how these new quarantine guidelines should be applied during a training session for Association COVID-19 Coordinators on December 20. Additional information is available on the MDH website [here](#).

Who is responsible for enforcing all of this and are there any real consequences?

As with all Minnesota Hockey rules, the responsibility of enforcement starts at the local level with association board members and progresses to District Directors. Associations have the authority to impose discipline on their members and teams. District Directors have the authority to impose discipline on teams and associations in their district.

Games, Tournaments & More - Date TBD

When will games be allowed to begin?

This is unknown at this time. However, our goal is to have an answer by December 23, and we are striving for games to resume as quickly as possible after Jan. 4.

Will games lost during the pause be rescheduled?



The hope is many of those games will be able to be rescheduled with the extension of the Minnesota Hockey season. The process of rescheduling league games will be managed at the district level. For the latest plan on rescheduling, contact your district representatives.

What is the situation with invitational tournaments?

Similar to games, there is no definitive date at this time for invitational tournaments. Based on the course of action by Governor Walz and the Minnesota Department of Health to date, we are anticipating a phased return that will gradually allow practices, then local games and then games involving more travel including tournaments.

At this time, the intent of Minnesota Hockey is to still allow tournaments at some point this season, but there may be certain districts and associations who choose to forego tournaments and focus instead on maximizing ice availability for league games.

Will the late fee for tournament sanctioning applications be waived if tournaments can restart?

This question will be better addressed when the timeline of tournaments is clearer, but Minnesota Hockey does intend to evaluate late fees for sanctioning, based on the unique nature of this season.

In addition, any sanctioning fees for tournaments scheduled for the pause will be refunded.

If tournament play is not allowed, will Districts, Regions and State still take place?

As of now, the intent is for Minnesota Hockey postseason tournaments to take place. If traditional tournaments are not allowed, but games are, it's possible an alternative format may be utilized for playoffs.

Has there been any collaboration with MSHSL?

Minnesota Hockey is proud to have a close relationship with the boys' and girls' high school hockey coaches' associations have collaborated with those groups since August. The coaches' associations have been representing hockey to the MSHSL and have been communicating with them frequently. Additional efforts to collaborate with the MSHSL are planned in an effort to increase consistency regarding return to play protocols for hockey.