



Mouth Guard Policy & Fact Sheet (V4)

October, 2003
(AMENDED)

The Ontario Minor Hockey Association implemented a Mouth Guard policy making the use of mouth guards mandatory for all OMHA Registered Players. Effective January 1, 2002, all OMHA players must wear a mouth guard for all OMHA sanctioned events.

It should be noted that other OHF Minor Member team's (ALLIANCE, GTHL, NOHA) players will **NOT** be required to wear mouth guards in OMHA Tournaments or Exhibition Games unless it is a policy of the respective team's organization or Member Partner.

The OMHA adopted a policy position at its' Annual General Meeting in June, 2000 for the mandatory use of intra-oral mouth guard protection by each player participating in an Ontario Minor Hockey Association game or practice. At the Annual General Meeting in June of 2001 the final policy regarding the use of an intra-oral mouthguard and the specifications for acceptable mouthguards were presented to the membership. The policy and specifications are as follows:

OMHA INTRA-ORAL MOUTH GUARD POLICY:

The mandatory use of a mouth guard product for each player participating in an Ontario Minor Hockey Association game or practice shall at all times while engaged in play or practices, practice drills or scrimmages on the ice surface wear an intra-oral mouth guard that conforms to the specifications set out by the Association as approved as suitable for use by the team's trainer.

INTRA-ORAL MOUTHGUARD SPECIFICATIONS:

An Intra-oral Mouth guard will:

- Be of any colour,
- Not be clear or translucent in colour;
- Be of one-piece (1) construction;
- Be easily sized by the participant or the participant's parents;
- Be of an even thickness from the front to the back of the device;
- Engage the biting surface of all of the teeth of the upper jaw and the lower jaw;
- Maintain alignment of the upper and lower jaw in a neutral position;
- Be able to be attached externally to the face mask or shield, or be form fitted or custom fitted to the teeth, and
- In the case of non-contact play will provide not less than one (1) millimeter of shock absorbent thickness between the teeth of the upper and lower jaw of a player, and
- In the case of contact play will provide not less than two (2) millimeters of shock absorbent thickness between the teeth of the upper and lower jaw of a player.

WHAT THE STANDARD MEANS

Be of any colour:

The mouth guard may be of any colour, this is not an issue for the OMHA.

Not be clear or translucent in colour:

An intra-oral mouth guard must be easily seen when the mouth of a player is opened. This is essential in order that on-ice officials can enforce the policy and for emergency medical services personnel to be able to rapidly determine if an injured player has a mouth guard in place.

Be of one-piece (1) construction:

The finished product must be a single object. Acceptable intra-oral mouth-guards may be constructed of laminated materials, however the materials used in the construction of a mouth guard will not de-laminate or separate while in normal use.

Be easily sized by the participant or the participant's parents:

The instructions provided by a manufacturer or supplier of intra-oral mouth guards will provide players/parents with easily understandable instructions on how to size and fit a mouth guard to a player.

Be of an even thickness from the front to the back of the device:

The thickness of the mouth guard between the upper and lower teeth shall be consistent from the back to the front of the device.

Engage the biting surface of all teeth of the upper jaw and the lower jaw:

An approved mouth guard will come into contact with the biting surface of all of the teeth of both the upper and lower jaw when the mouth guard is properly inserted into the mouth. When fitting a mouth guard, special attention needs to be taken to ensure that the biting surface of all teeth from the front to the rear most teeth are in contact with the biting surface of the mouth guard.

Maintain alignment of the upper and lower jaw in a neutral position:

A mouth guard will, when fitted, hold the lower jaw in a natural or neutral position in relation to the upper jaw for the individual player. An approved mouth guard will not cause the lower jaw to be forced either forward or backward from its normal position.

Be able to be attached externally to the facemask or shield, or be form fitted or custom fitted to the teeth:

If an approved mouth guard has not been custom fitted by a dentist, denturist, or dental hygienist, the mouth guard must have a means by which it can be attached to the cage or visor that is attached to the player's helmet. Mouth guards that are custom fitted by a dentist, denturist, or dental hygienist do not require an external attachment or lanyard to connect them to the facemask or shield.

In the case of non-contact play will provide not less than one (1) millimeter of shock absorbent thickness between the teeth of the upper and lower jaw of a player.

In the case of contact play will provide not less than two (2) millimeters of shock absorbent thickness between the teeth of the upper and lower jaw of a player:

A mouth guard is considered to be compliant with the OMHA standard when there is respectively one (1) or two (2) millimeters of thickness remaining between the teeth of the upper and lower jaw. Any mouth guard where the thickness respectively is less than one (1) or two (2) millimeters of thickness between the teeth of the upper and lower jaw in no longer compliant with the standard. Also, any mouth guard that has been chewed through or has cracks or breaks in its surface is no longer compliant and must be replaced.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ'S)

What is the Implementation Date?

Players engaged in play or practices are required to have an approved mouth guard in use on and after January 1, 2002.

Is there a list of Approved Products?

The OMHA neither endorses nor recommends any particular product or manufacturer. Any intra-oral mouth guard product that meets the stated specifications set out by the OMHA is acceptable for use. It is essential that local associations and team trainers become familiar with this policy and the specifications of acceptable intra-oral mouth guards.

Who is responsible for ensuring that the mouth guard policy is implemented?

The responsibility to ensure implementation involves all coaches, trainers, officials and association executive. It is also essential that parents, public safety organizations, medical and injury prevention proponents and agencies become familiar with and lend support to the principle of using mouth guards in the game of hockey.

What are the sanctions, who is responsible for implementation?

Effective the 2003-2004 Season, that as an enhancement to Hockey Canada Rule 24(g), in all OMHA Hockey, the wearing of a mouth guard is mandatory. When a player fails to properly wear a mouth guard on the ice during a game, he shall be assessed a Misconduct Penalty. The offending player is prevented from further participation until such time as an intra-oral mouth guard that conforms to the specifications set out by the Association as approved as suitable for use by the team's trainer is in place.

Do the 'boil and bite' style of mouth guards meet the OMHA policy?

Yes, so long as it conforms to the specified standards as described.

Does an approved mouth guard have to have a bite bar that engages all of a players teeth?

Yes, the biting surface of all of a players teeth must be able to bite down on a mouth guard in order for it to be approved.

Does it matter what type of material or strap is used to attach a mouth guard to the facemask or shield of a hockey player?

It does not matter what type of material is used, however the external strap or lanyard that is used to attach the mouth guard to the facemask or shield must be attached to the mouth guard and be approved by the mouth guard manufacturer of the mouth guard. Mouth guards do not meet the OMHA specification if the mouth guard is attached to the facemask or shield by a means other than one that is approved by the mouth guard manufacturer.

Does the Policy apply to Goaltenders?

Yes, the policy applies to all players including goaltenders.