

# Return to Play Standards

## Michigan Amateur Hockey Association 2020-21

Revised November 5, 2020

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 during Phases 4-6 of the Michigan Safe Start Plan. 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 October 29<sup>th</sup>, the Michigan Department of Health & Human Services (MDHHS) issued its [Gatherings and Face Mask Order](#) under section 2253 of the Public Health Code. This Emergency Order was 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.”
    - A ‘close contact’ is defined as being 6 feet or less apart from an infected person for an accumulation of 15 minutes over a 24-hour period, at any point from two days before symptoms until the time the individual is isolated. (Updated October 2020, CDC)
    - “Close contacts” may have to quarantine for 14 days – follow Health Department guidance
  - 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 \(October 29, 2020\)](#)
    - General capacity limitations at gatherings (Section 2)
    - Organized sports gathering restrictions (Section 5)
    - Face mask requirement at gatherings (Section 6)
    - Contact Tracing (Section 9)



## RINK OPERATORS (continued)

- [USA Hockey's 'Returning to the Rinks' Document \(May 5, 2020\)](#)
- NOTE: Non-compliance with these Return to Play Standards should be reported to the MAHA immediately

## 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 Emergency Order – Gatherings and Face Mask Order \(October 29, 2020\)](#), spectator attendance is limited to the following throughout the State of Michigan:
  - In venues with fixed seating, limit attendance to 20% of venue seating capacity (up to 500 attendees)
  - In venues without fixed seating, limit attendance to 20 persons per 1,000 square feet in each occupied room
- Members / families are encouraged to use, support and promote risk mitigation strategies to minimize the potential spread of COVID-19:
  - Personal Hygiene
    - Wash hands frequently, for at least 20 seconds with soap and water or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol
    - Do not touch your face
    - Cough or sneeze into a tissue or the bend of your elbow, dispose of the tissue and wash/ sanitize hands immediately
  - Social Distancing
    - Maintain social distancing measures (6 ft apart) whenever possible on or off the ice
    - Limit on-ice group discussions so players are not in close proximity for extended periods of time
    - Do not use benches during practice sessions
    - Discourage unnecessary physical contact, such as high fives, handshakes, fist bumps, or hugs
  - Personal Protective Equipment
    - Players are required to wear a facial covering when entering & exiting the facility, while in common areas of the facility, as well as during on-ice participation as required
    - Coaches, parents and spectators shall all wear a facial covering at all times in the facility
    - Do not share water bottles. Mark them clearly so you know which one is yours
    - Players should bring their own hand sanitizer
    - Players should clean and disinfect gear after each use
    - Whether an athlete wears a full cage, full face shield, or a cage-shield combination, your helmet facemask is a personal choice; however, a *full, clear polycarbonate shield or clear shield cage combination may provide a higher level of protection than a traditional cage*



## 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 \(October 29, 2020\)](#), facial coverings are required in hockey. This includes athletes and coaches, at all times during active participation and all times during non-active participation, when 6 feet of physical distance cannot be maintained. In both practices and training sessions, in all MERC regions of the state, the Emergency Order applies
  - MDHHS Emergency Order – *Gatherings and Face Mask Order* (October 29, 2020) does not define ‘facial coverings’ for purposes of organized sports; however, facial coverings must cover the nose and mouth. The following are not prohibited by the MDHHS Emergency Order – *Gatherings and Face Mask Order* (October 29, 2020):
    - Traditional cloth / fabric masks (worn on the face, covering nose / mouth)
    - Neck gaiters (worn on the face, covering nose / mouth)
    - Sports masks (worn on the face, covering nose / mouth)
    - [CCM Game-On Face Masks](#)
    - [Bauer Concept III Face Shield with a Bauer Splash Guard](#) (splash guard must be properly applied)
  - [Statement from the Hockey Equipment Certification Council \(HECC\) – click here for full version](#):
    - HECC has determined that any modification to the helmet will void the helmet’s certification. This would include any Spit Guard that is applied to the helmet, or any Spit Guard that replaces the components of the approved helmet.
    - A helmet modified with any Spit Guard must be verified by HECC with that modification. It is HECC’s position that:
      - a) The original helmet manufacturer must approve the use of the Spit Guard with its product, AND;
      - b) The modified product must be verified by the HECC validator to ensure that it still meets the applicable test standard
    - *Without meeting these two requirements, the HECC Certification is voided by the addition of the Spit Guard.*
  - The MAHA recognizes that coaches may be able to structure certain practices, or portions of a practice, that would permit 6 feet of physical distance to be **consistently** maintained.
    - Skating-only exercises
    - Individual skills sessions
    - [Video: Principles of “Grid Hockey” – USA Hockey ADM Regional Manager, Roger Grillo](#)
  - During those practices, or portions of a practice, permitting 6 feet of physical distance to be **consistently** maintained, facial coverings may not be required
  - If 6 feet of physical distancing cannot be consistently maintained, the facial covering requirement must be adhered to
- In-rink capacity would allow for regular game play, with the following conditions:
  - Consistent with current Executive 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



## RINK OPERATORS (continued)

- 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* (October 29, 2020) 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).

## LEAGUE PLAY

Given the unforeseeable future of the COVID-19 pandemic, where possible, our league partners (i.e. Little Caesars Amateur Hockey League, Adray, MGHL, etc.) should align their divisional play based on the regions established by the Michigan Economic Recovery Council (MERC) map. This will minimize travel requirements for divisional play, as well as minimize potential disruptions in league play caused by fluctuations in COVID-19 cases.

## 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 \(October 29, 2020\)](#)



# **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](#)

