



September 11th, 2020

To the Members of our Michigan Hockey Community:

Over the last week, Governor Whitmer has signed several Executive Orders which allow for a return to hockey activity in Michigan. The details contained in those Executive Orders have been the subject of discussion, as well as debate, as there are significant conditions required for returning to organized sports, while still navigating the COVID-19 pandemic. The Michigan Amateur Hockey Association (MAHA) has actively sought out clarification on the issued Executive Orders, including direction from the Governor's legal counsel. Due to the fluid nature of this situation, the MAHA will continue to assist its associations in understanding the requirements, as well as provide continued points of clarification as they become available.

The attached document is a revised version of the MAHA Return to Play Standards for the 2020-21 season. We have incorporated the mandated guidance, as well as clarifications, of the Executive Orders into this revision. It should be noted that these are not MAHA regulations, and thus the MAHA has no legal authority to waive or modify Executive Orders from the Governor's office.

As you review the document in full, there are a few key considerations to note:

- 1) Although the mandate for facial coverings to be worn by athletes, coaches and spectators is not ideal, its intent is to protect our own families, as well as the members of our hockey family. It has been proven that mask use and proper social distancing significantly slows the spread of COVID-19. Despite the fact that our rinks have re-opened and a new season is beginning, it is not time to forget about the risk mitigation strategies for minimizing the spread of COVID-19. This is a challenge that all organized team sports are faced with at this time – not just hockey.
- 2) Fortunately, the sport of hockey lends itself additional flexibility in meeting the mask mandate for organized sports. This is based on the fact that youth hockey players are required to wear helmets with a face mask (either cage or shield). As a result, our athletes have more options available to them for meeting the facial covering standard. Whether it's a traditional cloth mask, a neck gaiter or a newly-released helmet accessory, our community will find many options for meeting this requirement. We highly encourage you to research the various options available in the marketplace, in an effort to find the best solution for your athlete.
- 3) Based on all updates provided by the Governor's office this past week, it is evident that the Governor discourages contact sports, and/or indoor athletic activity, at this time. With rinks re-opened, it is up to our statewide hockey community to show that we can safely operate at this stage of the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on this challenge, compliance is critical. Now that we are fortunate to have achieved our goal of re-opening for hockey activity, we must take all necessary steps to ensure that our doors remain open and our season is not interrupted. While we anticipate challenges along the way, we're confident that the protocols in place will allow us to safely, and efficiently, enjoy our 2020-21 hockey season.

As a follow-up to this revision of the MAHA Return to Play Standards, the MAHA Executive Committee will plan on scheduling a follow-up Zoom call for additional discussions, as well as Q & A. The call will be tentatively scheduled for the week of September 14th – 18th. We will provide confirmed call information as it becomes available.

As previously noted, this will continue to be a very fluid situation. With that in mind, the Michigan Amateur Hockey Association (MAHA) will commit to providing regular updates, as they become available. We sincerely appreciate the patience and support of our hockey community, and we look forward to seeing you at the rink!

Sincerely,

George Atkinson

George Atkinson

President

Michigan Amateur Hockey Association

Jason Reynolds

Jason Reynolds

Director of Operations & Marketing

Michigan Amateur Hockey Association

Return to Play Standards

Michigan Amateur Hockey Association 2020-21

Revised September 11, 2020

The Michigan Amateur Hockey Association (MAHA) is initiating the following 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. It is designed with the recommendations of the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Michigan Department of Health & Human Services, as well as Executive Orders 2020-175, 176, & 180 signed by Governor Whitmer. 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.

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 that are not provided for in the current Executive Orders.

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

- 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. Furthermore, 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
 - Each association and team should have an emergency plan for any positive COVID-19 cases that arise
 - 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



ASSOCIATIONS (continued)

- 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
- If a case is reported to any team, and/or association liaison, it should immediately be reported to all applicable parties including association leadership, rink management, the Michigan Amateur Hockey Association (MAHA), as well as local health officials
- If a positive test is confirmed:
 - 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
 - Notify any teams or players that shared ice sessions with the infected player over the previous 14 days
 - Notify any opponents or teams scheduled to practice or compete with the player's team over the upcoming 14 days
 - 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 tournaments and events that may occur within this timeframe
 - Teams should not be penalized for forfeiting games due to COVID-19 concerns
- Know your facility's safety measures and require all members to follow them. 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 Executive Orders:
 - [Executive Order 2020-175 \(September 3, 2020\)](#)
 - Workplace Safeguards (Section 1, pgs 2-4)
 - Public Accommodations (Section 12, pgs 14-15)
 - Sports and Exercise Facilities (Section 13, pgs 15-16)
 - [Executive Order 2020-176 \(September 3, 2020\)](#)
 - Public Accommodation Restrictions (Section 3e, pg 3)
 - Organized Sports (Section 7, pg 5)
- Rink operators are expected to notify the MAHA of member programs not complying with these Return to Play Standards. Likewise, local associations and member programs are expected to notify the MAHA of rink operators in non-compliance as well. It is everyone's job to keep participants safe at rinks available for play



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?](#)
- Michigan Economic Recovery Council (MERC) Regional Map:
 - Regions 1-5, & 7: Live spectators are limited to the guests of the athletes, with each athlete limited to two (2) guests
 - Regions 6 & 8: Phase 5 guidelines limit the number of people in a venue to 25% of its maximum capacity or to 250, whichever is smaller. Each rink is considered a separate venue
- 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
 - Your helmet facemask is a personal choice, but 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



ON-ICE GUIDELINES (continued)

- Per [Executive Order 2020-180](#), 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 (including Regions 6 & 8), the Executive Order 2020-180 applies
 - [Executive Order 2020-180](#) 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 Executive Order 2020-180:
 - Traditional cloth / fabric masks
 - Neck gaiters
 - Sports masks
 - Splash guards / shields
 - Attachable helmet accessories (located inside hockey face mask)
 - 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, 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 penalty will be assessed if players enter on-ice competition without a facial covering
 - On-ice officials may wear facial coverings during game play, if he/she desires. On-ice officials shall wear face coverings upon arrival to a facility, before the contest, during intermissions and following the contest until departure
 - 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
 - A two-official system shall be used for games at all levels
- 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 [Executive Order 2020-180](#) 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 Executive Order from the Governor's office

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 Executive Orders 2020-175, 176 and 180 signed by Governor Whitmer.



TEAM TRYOUTS

TIER I TRYOUTS – YOUTH & GIRLS 12U – 19U – May be scheduled no sooner than Wednesday, September 9th, 2020

TIER II TRYOUTS – YOUTH & GIRLS 10U – 19U – May be scheduled no sooner than Wednesday, September 16th, 2020

TIER III – EVALUATIONS / DRAFT – Evaluation skates may be scheduled no sooner than Wednesday, September 23rd, 2020. Team drafts may be scheduled at the discretion of each association.

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](#)

