



**UPDATED AS OF
SEPTEMBER 29, 2021**



SEASON PLAN



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1 OVERVIEW

Hockey Alberta and our Member organizations are committed to a fun and safe environment for all participants as we get the 2021-22 season underway. The **Season Plan** set forth in this document will prepare Member organizations and participants to participate safely this season.

This plan is current as of September 29, 2021.

Hockey Alberta establishes COVID-related plans for our sport based on mandates implemented by the Government of Alberta and Alberta Health Services. Changes contained in this edition of the **Season Plan** reflect the State of Public Health Emergency declared by the Government of Alberta on September 15, as well as current CMOH Public Health Orders and Guidance for Restrictions Exemption Program.

To review current CMOH orders and other mandates and guidance by the Government of Alberta:

[CMOH Public Health Orders >](#)

- [CMOH Order 44-2021 >](#)
- [CMOH Order 45-2021 >](#)
- [Guidance for REP >](#)

[Government of Alberta – Current Measures >](#)

It is the responsibility of the Member organization or participating team to be aware of any local government and/ or facility-specific health and safety mandates (for example, Restrictions Exemption Program status/ vaccine exemption, masking, capacity limits, physical distancing, facility entrance etc).

Where local mandates are in place:

- a. All Hockey Alberta Member organizations and participants are to adhere to those mandates in all hockey-related activities.
- b. When an organization is hosting a hockey-related event, the home team must ensure all participants (including visiting teams, off-ice officials, on-ice officials, or any individual players) are informed of these requirements as soon as possible prior to the event.
- c. A Hockey Alberta Member organization or participant not adhering to local mandates may be subject to disciplinary action.

Contents in this document pertain to youth sport (minor hockey) with participants 17 years and younger. Guidelines for adult sport (junior and senior hockey) with participants 18 years and older can be found in the Junior/ Senior Hockey Season Plan (available on the [Hockey Alberta website](#)).

Please visit [Hockey Alberta's website](#) regularly for important information and updates.



2 GOVERNMENT MANDATES

Youth sport (under 18) activities are permitted. For hockey, this includes full practices, games and tournaments.

Youth (under 18) sport, fitness, recreation and performance activities (Sept 16)

- Indoor group classes, training, and competitions are permitted, but participants are required to:
 - screen for symptoms
 - maintain 2 metres distancing, except youth while engaged in physical activity
 - wear a mask, except youth while engaged in physical activity
- Spectator attendance is restricted to 1/3 fire code capacity, attendees are limited to a single household or 2 close contact if living alone and must be masked and maintain 2 metres physical distancing.
- Outdoor activities can continue with no restrictions.

Masking is required indoors, with the following exceptions for indoor physical activity:

[Order 44-2021, Part 3 - Masking](#)

B. General exceptions to indoor masking

3.3 Despite this Part of this Order, a person is not required to wear a face mask at all times while attending an indoor public place if the person is:

- (c) a youth participating in an indoor physical activity;*
- (d) an adult participating in an indoor physical activity;*

For Hockey Alberta Member organizations, this means:

- a) Face masks are not required by any player while engaged in physical activity (on the ice or on the players' bench).
- b) Face masks are not required by coaches or on-ice officials on the ice surface during physical activity.
- c) Face masks are required by coaches and team staff while on the bench, and by all penalty/ timekeeping staff.
- d) Face masks are required by everyone while in a dressing room.



Physical distancing is required indoors, with the following exceptions for physical activity:

[Order 44-2021, Part 4 – Physical Distancing](#)

B. General exceptions to two metre physical distance requirement

4.5 Despite this Part, a coach, instructor or trainer is not required to maintain two metres physical distance from the person being coached, guided or instructed for physical activity, performance activity, or recreational activity if doing so inhibits the guidance or instruction being provided.

4.6 Despite this Part, a youth is not required to maintain two metres physical distance while participating in an indoor or outdoor physical activity or performance activity.

Municipalities or facilities have been provided the option of participating in the Restrictions Exemption Program (REP), as outlined in [Order 45-2021](#).

The REP permits businesses/entities/organizers (operators) to operate without the majority of public health restrictions in [Order 44-2021](#) provided that operators screen patrons or attendees for proof of vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test result. Masking is still required.

Where the REP is being implemented, the following rules apply for youth sport as outlined in the Guidance for Restrictions Exemption Program:

<p>Youth Activities and Youth Participation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the purposes of this program, a youth is someone who is under the age of 18 years of age. • Youth participating in youth activities in a facility that is participating in REP are not required to be screened as part of the REP. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Parents who are required to support youth in their activities (e.g. parent and tot groups) would be required to follow REP requirements in order to attend. ○ Youth are subject to physical distancing at all other times when not engaged in the physical activity (e.g. locker rooms, common areas etc.) • If youth wish to access other amenities beyond youth-specific sports, recreation or performance activities in a facility participating in REP, for these purposes they will be required to be screened per the REP, as applicable (12+ years of age). • Coaches, instructors, trainers, referees etc. for youth activities, who are 18 years or older, are subject to the public health measures or REP requirements in the facility. • School groups accessing facilities otherwise under REP (for the purposes of K-12 curriculum) are not required to be screened as part of REP.
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Please note that the items outlined in the previous chart are minimum standards established by the Government of Alberta. Some municipalities have adopted stricter requirements. Teams/ MHAs are asked to consult with their arena(s) to confirm with the facility its plans and expectations with regard to physical distancing and spectator requirements.

The REP is an optional program, and operators who choose not to participate may continue to operate but must fully implement all of the public health restrictions outlined in Order 44-2021. These requirements include masking, physical distancing, one-third occupancy (in accordance with the Alberta Fire Code), maintenance of family cohorts, and other measures.

For additional clarity as to what is required in an REP or a non-REP facility, please review the following chart.



Access Requirements – REP and non-REP facilities

Facility Choice	Participants	Coach/Official/Volunteer	Spectators	
REP Implemented for all facility users, 12 years and older	All individuals aged 12 years and older must provide proof of vaccination/ negative test or medical exemption.	All individuals aged 12 years and older must provide proof of vaccination/ negative test, or medical exemption.	All spectators aged 12 years and older must provide proof of vaccination/ negative test, or medical exemption.	All spectators must wear face masks.
REP Exemption for youths 12-17 years of age participating in physical activity.	<p>Participants in youth physical activity aged 12-17 years are exempt from providing proof of vaccination/ negative test, or medical exemption.</p> <p>Individuals aged 12-17 years participating in adult sport must provide proof of vaccination/ negative test, or medical exemption.</p>	<p>Adult coaches and officials (18 years and over) must provide proof of vaccination or negative test, or medical exemption.</p> <p>Volunteers/ coaches aged 12-17 years are exempt from providing proof of vaccination/ negative test.</p> <p>Officials aged 12-17 years old are exempt from providing proof of vaccination/ negative test.</p>	All spectators aged 12 years and older must provide proof of vaccination/ negative test, or medical exemption.	All spectators must wear face masks.
Non-REP	<p>All facility users must mask and physically distance when not participating in physical activity.</p> <p>Adult sport may operate if the program has required REP in place and all participants meet the criteria.</p>	<p>All facility users must mask and physically distance when not participating in physical activity.</p> <p>Coaches and officials are exempt from masking when on the ice during physical activity.</p>	Facility must only allow 1/3 of occupancy load as per Fire Code.	<p>All spectators must mask and maintain 2 metres physical distancing.</p> <p>Only seated with those from your family cohort.</p>

***NOTE:** According to Order 45-2021 (Part 5), it is the obligation of the eligible participant (the operator of a discretionary business, entity or event) that implements the REP to screen every patron and attendee at the point of entry for proof of vaccination, proof of negative COVID-19 test in the past 72 hours, or an original vaccine medical exemption letter. Full details can be reviewed in the Order.

This chart can be downloaded and printed as a standalone file. See *Appendix A*.



3 GENERAL PROTOCOLS

1. Coaching and Officials Clinics

For all in-person coaching and officials clinics offered by Hockey Alberta, the following rules will be place for participants:

- Masks and physical distancing are required for all participants during classroom/ off-ice instructional sessions.
- Masks and physical distancing are not required during on-ice sessions.

2. Vaccinations

Hockey Alberta does not require anyone to be vaccinated to participate in amateur hockey with a Hockey Alberta Member organization. However, as noted in Section 2, adult coaches, volunteers and officials may be required to show proof of vaccination if they are working in a facility participating in the REP.

- a) Provincial Health officials continue to recommend everyone who is eligible to get vaccinated.
- b) Member organizations considering adopting their own COVID-19 vaccination-related policies should refer to the enclosed guidance from Sport Law. **See Appendix B.**
- c) Where teams/ organizations are considering out-of-province travel, they must familiarize themselves with any requirements of the province/ state to which they are travelling, and adhere to any mandates regarding vaccinations in that region.

3. Screening and Symptoms

All participants and other individuals involved in, or attending, a hockey activity are to show respect and caution for themselves and others. This includes:

- a) Self-screening prior to attending any hockey-related activity: any individual who has a suspected case of COVID-19 or is feeling ill and showing COVID-19-like symptoms (such as a cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose, or sore throat) should stay home.
- b) While participating in a hockey-related activity, any participant who exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 (such as a cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose, or sore throat) is to notify his/her head coach (or appropriate team contact person) immediately, discontinue participation, and return home.
- c) If a coach or event leader notices a participant exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, the participant should be removed from participation, and return home
- d) In all the above examples, the participant then must adhere to the protocol provided by the Government of Alberta:
 - a. Consult the Government of Alberta guidelines (<https://www.alberta.ca/isolation.aspx>) to determine if there is a need to isolate and/ or to determine if a COVID-19 test is required.
 - b. Follow all Alberta Health guidance pertaining to return to participation once symptom-free or until negative test results have been received.



4. General

Last season, the hockey community implemented general health and safety best practices. Wherever possible, players, coaches, staff, on- and off-ice officials, and spectators are to continue these practices:

- a) Physically distance wherever and whenever possible.
 - a. Players should avoid post-whistle scrums.
 - b. On-ice officials should limit their presence around players between whistles.
- b) Avoid handshakes, fist bumps, hugs, or any physical contact whenever possible.
- c) Wash hands frequently with soap and water.
- d) Wash equipment and clothing regularly (after each event if possible) and do not share towels, jerseys, pant shells, socks, bandanas/skull caps, compression gear, etc.
- e) Have your own water bottle, clearly labelled. Fill the bottle at home, and clean thoroughly before and after each event.
- f) Wash and sanitize after each use any equipment that must be shared, such as goalie gear.
- g) Arrive partially dressed in equipment to help reduce time in the dressing room.
- h) Limit the time spent in a facility by not arriving too far in advance of the start time and leaving quickly after completion.
- i) In the dressing room:
 - a. Utilize physical distancing, use two rooms, where possible.
 - b. Restrict access to team personnel and players as much as possible. If a parent is required to access the dressing room (for example, to assist younger players putting on equipment and/ or for medical situations) only one parent per player should be permitted.
- j) Hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes should be available for all participants.
- k) Do not share food or beverages.
- l) During a practice, coaches should minimize times where athletes are required to be in close proximity by using station-based practice plans.
- m) Off-ice training should take place in areas where physical distancing can occur (for example, gym space or outdoors).
- n) Medical Treatment/Therapy
 - a. Hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes should be made available as players enter/ leave.
 - b. Medical rooms/tables should be disinfected between treatments.
 - c. Protective face masks and gloves should be worn and therapists should wash hands and change gloves between treatments.

5. Travel

- a) Teams that choose to travel by bus are required to adhere to Government of Alberta requirements, as well as the requirements of the specific bus company and/ or driver.
- b) Teams intending to travel outside the province, or teams intending to travel to Alberta from other jurisdictions, must adhere to [any travel mandates](#) implemented by the Government of Alberta or other appropriate local, provincial/ state or national government.
- c) Teams based outside of Alberta may participate in a Hockey Alberta league, providing the team's Provincial Government and the Government of Alberta allow interprovincial travel/ participation.

6. Team Meetings

At this time of year, teams often schedule teambuilding sessions, parent meetings, and other planning sessions for the season. Hockey Alberta recommends that wherever possible these sessions be held using a virtual platform. If held in person, all participants are to follow the rules for the facility where the meeting is being held.



4 RULES AND REGULATIONS

a. On-ice Officials

- I. All Hockey Alberta sanctioned games (including exhibition) must use registered officials.
- II. After December 15, only registered officials for the current season may be used.

b. Coaches

- a. Coaches need to have all certification requirements completed by November 15.
- b. The updated Hockey University: **“Planning a Safe Return to Hockey”** course is now available through HCR. It is approximately 20 minutes long and free of charge to complete.

c. Overage Players

- I. Overage Player policies for each specific level of hockey remain in effect and unchanged for the 2021-22 season.
- II. Changing Overage Policies to accommodate more players and/ or accepting players one additional year older than the policies currently allow would be a risk to player safety.

d. Suspensions

Because formal game play was never really established in the 2020-21 season, outstanding suspensions coming into the 2021-22 season will be dealt with in the following manner:

- 1) Suspensions carried over from the 2019-20 season:
 - I. All suspensions resulting from a Match Penalty on Official, Match Penalty and/or a Gross Misconduct infraction (for players and team officials) will be carried over to be served in the 2021-22 season.
 - II. All accumulation suspensions resulting from multiple Game Misconducts or Gross Misconducts assessed in violation of 9.2 Harassment of Officials / Unsportsmanlike Conduct will be carried over to be served in the 2021-22 season.
 - III. All other suspensions that resulted from an on-ice infraction (violation of the Playing Rules) will be deemed to be completely served as of April 30, 2021.
- 2) Suspensions assessed in 2020-21
 - I. All suspensions resulting from a Match Penalty on Official, Match Penalty and/or a Gross Misconduct infraction (for players and team officials) will be carried over to be served in the 2021-22 season.
 - II. All other suspensions that resulted from an on-ice infraction (violation of the Playing Rules) have been deemed to be completely served as of April 30, 2021.

5 CHAMPIONSHIPS AND TOURNAMENTS

A plan for League, Regional and/ or Provincial Championships is being established. Hockey Alberta is working with representatives at all levels of hockey to ensure our Championships return for the players and Teams at the end of this season.

Sanction requests for individual tournaments are being accepted, and tournaments may be held anywhere in Alberta, unless not allowed by local government mandate. Tournament listings can be found on the [Hockey Alberta website](#).



6 INSURANCE

Hockey Canada

Under Hockey Canada's current General Liability policy, there is a specific definition for the term 'bodily injury' and that definition includes **sickness and disease**. Many insurance companies are implementing Communicable Disease/COVID-19 exclusions on policies, but Hockey Canada has successfully negotiated to leave that exclusion off until September 1, 2023 at the earliest. As a result, individual waivers pertaining to COVID-19 by Hockey Alberta Member Organizations are not required.

Facility Contracts

It is important to review new facility contracts for the 2021-22 season. They may contain a new clause which absolves the municipality/ private facility owners of any liability related to COVID-19. Given that Hockey Alberta's Member organizations will have little control over cleaning/ sanitizing of rented premises, they should not be expected to take on all liability related to COVID-19 in these facilities.

Also, it is important to ensure that the facility contract includes a *force majeure* clause.

7 APPENDICES

Appendix A: *Access Requirements Chart*

Appendix B: *FAQ – COVID-19 Vaccinations – from Sport Law*

Appendices and the 2021-22 Season Plan
can be accessed at any time on the Hockey Alberta website:

[SEASON PLAN >](#)

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