



JUNIOR / SENIOR HOCKEY
SEPTEMBER 28, 2021

SEASON PLAN





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1 INTRODUCTION

Hockey Alberta and our Member Leagues 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 help Teams to prepare to participate safely this season.

This plan is current as of September 28, 2021, and reflects the new CMOH Public Health Orders issued on September 24.

Hockey Alberta continues to establish 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 new mandates and the State of Public Health Emergency declared by the Government of Alberta on September 15.

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 League and teams to be aware of any local government and/ or facility-specific health and safety mandates (for example, masking, capacity, physical distancing, facility entrance etc). Where local mandates are in place:

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

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



2 WHAT HAS CHANGED

On September 15, the Government of Alberta (GOA) announced that Adult sport (18-plus) is only able to operate if the Restrictions Exemption Program (REP), as outlined by the GOA, is implemented.

All Junior and Senior Hockey is subject to this and must implement the REP if they wish to begin to operate.

Mandatory restriction - Effective Sept. 16 and 20

Adult (18-plus) sport, fitness and performance activities (Sept 20)

- The following restrictions apply unless the facility or program implements the Restrictions Exemption Program:
 - Indoor group classes and activities are not permitted.
 - Indoor competitions are paused except where vaccine exemptions have been granted.
 - Indoor one-on-one training and solo activities are allowed with 3 metre physical distancing.
 - Outdoor activities can continue with no restrictions.

3 RESTRICTIONS EXEMPTION PROGRAM

1. Overview

The REP permits in-scope businesses, entities and organizers to operate without most public health restrictions as outlined in [Order 45-2021](#). Operators that are out-of-scope or choose not to fully implement the program must comply with all public health restrictions outlined in [Order 44-2021](#).

Currently, all Adult (18+) sport is restricted from operating and therefore the only way for Junior and Senior Hockey to begin operating is by implementing the REP.

2. How to Participate

There is no application process, but all organizations choosing to implement the REP must follow, or exceed, the program requirements at all times.

Players and the REP

To be eligible to participate in Junior or Senior hockey, an individual must provide valid:

- proof of vaccination;
- proof of a negative COVID-19 test result from a sample that is taken within the prior 72 hours;
- original vaccine medical exception letter.

Employees and the Restriction Exemption Program

The REP is not intended or required for employees or contractors attending workplaces. Employers are strongly encouraged to promote COVID-19 vaccination to staff, volunteers, and other eligible persons as part of their public health strategy, and any consideration of vaccine requirements for staff is an employer decision.

If a League or Team is an employer, they can decide to implement a policy requiring employees to be vaccinated. Large corporations such as AHS, PCL, and Ellis-Don have vaccination requirements for employees. If you do implement a policy requiring vaccination of employees, it is recommended you get further legal advice when writing the policy due to legal issues involved in the employer-employee relationship.



Spectators and the Restriction Exemption Program

To be eligible to access a facility that has implemented the R.E.P., individuals 12 years old and older must provide valid:

- proof of vaccination;
- proof of a negative COVID-19 test result from a sample that is taken within the prior 72 hours;
- original vaccine medical exception letter.

Junior and Senior Teams need to work with their municipality/ facility operator to determine the roles and responsibilities of the facility as well as the Team in managing any spectators that are permitted in the building.

3. Enforcement

Organizations that implement REP will be audited for compliance. The requirements of implementing the program can be enforced by AHS, AGLC and police. Additionally, the public can [submit complaints](#) if they believe organizations are not in compliance.

4. Proof of Vaccination

Proof of vaccination can be provided in the following manner:

- Valid photo identification that matches the vaccine record (only required for adults 18 and over)
- Valid paper or digital vaccine record that shows name, vaccine type and date of administration:
 - From September 20 to October 25: proof of partial vaccination (one dose) is considered acceptable as long as the dose was given more than 2 weeks before the time of service.
 - After October 25: proof of full vaccination (two doses) is required

5. Proof of Negative Test

Proof of a negative test result can be provided in the following manner:

- Tests must be privately-paid, Health Canada approved rapid antigen, rapid PCR or lab-based PCR test completed within the previous 72 hours.
 - Valid test results should be a written or printed copy that clearly outlines the type of test, time of sample collection, clear indication of a negative result, and laboratory that completed the test, if applicable.
 - Photos of a rapid test result taken offsite is not sufficient.
 - Do not bring completed self-tests or rapid tests to businesses due to communicable disease risk.
- Tests must not be from Alberta Health Services or Alberta Precision Laboratories.
- Organizations offering on-site rapid testing should seek expert medical oversight prior to implementing a [rapid testing program](#).

6. Proof of Medical Exemption

Sports are non-essential activities and, at times, come with restrictions. When organizations are implementing the REP, it is within their purview to ensure all members are exempt or vaccinated. This means organizations can ask for proof of medical or religious exemptions in a reasonable and private manner - it is not enough for someone to declare they have a medical exemption.

Proof of a medical exemption can be provided in the following manner:

- A valid medical exemption is the original signed letter from a physician or nurse practitioner that includes:
 - Person's name that matches their identification;
 - Physician's or nurse practitioner's complete information, including name, phone number, contact information, professional registration number and signature;
 - statement that there is a medical reason for not being fully vaccinated against COVID-19;
 - the duration that the exemption is valid for.



4 IMPLEMENTATION OF REP

1. Collection of Medical Documentation

There are two privacy acts that should be considered when implementing the REP:

- The Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA), and
- The Health Information Act (HIA)

The key considerations when working to implement these Acts include:

- Ensuring you have informed consent to collect the data. (**See Appendix A – Sample Consent Form**)
- Collecting only as much data as is reasonably necessary to implement the Restriction Exemption Program

Consent to Gather Medical Information - The best way to start implementing the REP is to develop a Consent to Gather Medical Information form. As part of the requirements under PIPA, the Consent to Gather Medical Information form needs to include:

- That the organization is participating in the REP;
- The reason you are requesting this information (in this case, this would be medical information as it pertains to COVID vaccination status as a requirement to participate in the REP); and
- The information you will require (vaccination status).

Once the form has been completed, determine a private and secure manner for members to share their vaccination status. Using an online submission through a website portal could be one option. Another could be to set up in-person meeting and, one at a time, have individuals show the necessary information. Regardless of the manner chosen, assign one Privacy Officer to receive the submissions and record each individual's status (eligibility to participate as per the requirements outlined in the REP).

It is recommended to not request vaccination records via e-mail as it runs into the issue of retention. If you decide to allow e-mailed vaccination records, clearly communicate what will happen to the information upon receipt of the e-mail (either deleted once the information is seen or if a copy will be kept).

2. Verification of Medical Documentation

It will be the Team's responsibility to verify the status of each of their players and/ or Team Officials (if necessary). The following items are considered acceptable forms of verification:

- a) A picture or paper record of a valid Alberta Health Services, MyHealth Records, pharmacy, First Nations, or physician immunization record prominently displaying the name, type of vaccine and date of administration;
- b) Valid Government of Alberta vaccination QR code;
- c) An immunization record from another Canadian province or territory displaying the name, type of vaccine and date of administration;
- d) Canadian armed forces immunization record, displaying the name, type of vaccine and date of administration;
- e) Proof of a negative COVID-19 Health Canada approved test result from a sample that is taken within the prior 72 hours;
- f) original vaccine medical exception letter.

A religious exemption can be granted if the member has a bona fide and sincerely held religious belief. They can't have converted to that religion that morning to get a religious exemption. You can enquire for more information in a private and respectful manner, gather further evidence as needed, and only retain information that needs to be retained as per PIPA requirements.



Disciplinary Policies and Code of Conduct

You may have members who may be against the REP or may lie regarding vaccination status, especially if using the declaration process. Prior to implementing the REP, discuss with the Board how to handle those who want to play without being eligible for the REP or who lie about their eligibility.

It is reasonable to assert that members are bound by the Code of Conduct which means they are bound by policies and procedures.

3. Storage of Medical Documentation

It is strongly recommended that you do not retain records containing vaccination data such as photocopies or pictures of vaccination status.

The key considerations when working to comply with PIPA and HIA include:

- Storing private documents securely;
- Ensuring only those who have a reasonable need can access the data;
- Retaining the information only as long as reasonably necessary; and
- Developing a policy for destroying the data when it is no longer needed.

For a medical exemption, the Privacy Officer does not need to retain a copy of the doctor's note. It is enough for the Privacy Officer to have seen the note and document that the member is eligible for the REP.

In the case of both medical and religious exemptions, do not identify unvaccinated members. Keep one list of eligible people for the REP. Do not keep two separate lists identifying some people as vaccinated and some people with medical exemptions.

5 GENERAL PROTOCOLS

1. Masking

Regardless of the implementation of the Restrictions Exemption Program, masks are required to be worn in all public spaces and workplaces in the province.

Hockey Alberta is interpreting the mandate as follows:

- 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 during physical activity, but must be used when speaking in close proximity with other officials, players or team officials during stoppages of play or teaching moments in practice.
- 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.

Masks and physical distancing

Mandatory restriction - Effective Sept. 16

- Masking and 2 metres physical distancing are mandatory in all indoor public spaces, workplaces, and places of worship.
- Employees must mask in all indoor work settings, except while alone in work stations.
- The Restrictions Exemption Program does not apply to masking. Masks are still required in places that implement the program.



2. 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:
 - I. 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.
 - II. Follow all Alberta Health guidance pertaining to return to participation once symptom-free or until negative test results have been received.

3. Health & Safety Best Practices

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.
 - I. Players should avoid post-whistle scrums.
 - II. 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:
 - I. Utilize physical distancing, use two rooms, where possible.
 - II. Restrict access to team personnel and players as much as possible.
- j. Hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes should be available for all participants.
- k. Do not share food or beverages.
 - I. 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
 - I. Hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes should be made available as players enter/ leave.
 - II. Medical rooms/tables should be disinfected between treatments.
 - III. Protective face masks and gloves should be worn and therapists should wash hands and change gloves between treatments.



4. Travel

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.

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.

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.

5. Team Meetings

At this time of year, teams often schedule teambuilding sessions 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, a large room should be used in order to accommodate proper physical distancing requirements.

6 RULES AND REGULATIONS

1. On-ice Officials

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

2. 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.

3. Overage Players

- a. Overage Player policies for each specific level of hockey remain in effect and unchanged for the 2021-22 season.
- b. 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.

4. 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.

7 PLAYOFFS & CHAMPIONSHIPS

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.

8 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.

The 2021-22 Jr/ Sr Hockey Season Plan can be accessed at any time on the Hockey Alberta website:

[SEASON PLAN >](#)

Email: info@hockeyalberta.ca

Phone: 403-342-6777

Consent to Gather Medical Information

By signing this consent, the individual is aware of the current Alberta health orders which require proof of vaccination for all businesses implementing the Restriction Exemption program.

_____ League has made the decision to implement the program to ensure our season is able to start. The program will be in place until further notice.

Accordingly, until further notice, all members are required to provide proof of vaccination, a negative test or medical or religious exemption as a condition of their participation in all Team activity, including practices, games and off-ice training sessions.

By signing this consent form:

1. I confirm my ability and willingness to provide proof of vaccination, a negative test or of medical or religious exemption upon request.
2. I consent to a record of my vaccination, negative test or medical or religious exemption being kept on file until no longer required.
3. I confirm that my proof of vaccination, negative test, or medical or religious exemption provided is accurate and true.
4. I understand that I am subject to the Team, League and Hockey Alberta's disciplinary policy should I falsify my records.
5. I understand that if I have only received the first dose of a two-dose vaccine that I will be asked to provide proof of full vaccination by October 25th.

Name

Signature

Parent/Guardian Name
(If Participant is Under 18)

Signature

Date: _____