



2020-21 Ice Hockey Requirements and Recommendations

With the support from the NFHS Ice Hockey Rules Committee and the Ohio High School Athletic Association, the considerations outlined in this document are meant to decrease potential exposure to respiratory droplets by encouraging social distancing, limiting participation in administrative tasks to essential personnel and allowing for appropriate protective equipment.

Note: This is not an exhaustive list and there might be additional steps in each school, city and state to help prevent the spread of virus. Even when taking all precautions, there will still be risk of transmitting illnesses. Everyone should stay vigilant about the health of members of their teams. Lastly, the situation with COVID-19 is rapidly changing. These considerations may quickly become outdated. Please keep up with the latest from the CDC and other health officials in your area.

Visit the [COVID-19 Return to Play Recommendations Document](#) and the [Responsible Restart Ohio Guide for Youth, Collegiate, Amateur, Club and Professional Sports](#) for further requirements and recommendations that apply to all sports, including ice hockey. Please know that some of the requirements and recommendations in this sport-specific document duplicate state guidance.

*A **requirement** must be adhered to and followed. A **recommendation** is a consideration to the sport and allows for optional guidelines. Recommendations are not required, but are permitted and strongly encouraged.*

*Ice arenas are most commonly privately-owned facilities. Be sure to know and follow the policies and procedures of the facility prior to practice or a contest.

REQUIREMENTS

Winter 2020-21: Return to Competition

People (players, coaches, officials, spectators, etc.) feeling sick or that have been exposed to someone sick, should not attend or participate in competitions or practices. The OHSAA requires all participants and spectators to practice social distancing and wear face coverings whenever possible. Host facilities shall communicate with spectators “know before you go” before each event.

General Requirements:

- Anyone attending a practice or game – players, coaches, officials, trainers, cheerleaders, volunteers, staff, spectators, etc.: Must conduct a symptom assessment before each practice or contest, and anyone experiencing symptoms must stay home (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>).
 - Individuals with COVID-19 symptoms should isolate themselves per CDC’s guidance and contact their healthcare provider (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/isolation.html>).

- Individuals with confirmed COVID-19 or who have symptoms should follow CDC’s guidance for when they can be around others again (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/end-home-isolation.html>).
- An athlete who tests positive for COVID-19, whether symptomatic or asymptomatic, must not return to sport activities until a documented medical exam is performed clearing the individual to return to play. The documented medical exam must specifically include an assessment of the cardiac/heart risk of high-intensity exercise due to the potential of myocarditis occurring in COVID-19 patients.
- Consistent with state guidance, schools/teams regarding “Confirmed or Suspected COVID-19 Cases”:
 - Immediately isolate, and seek medical care for, any individual who becomes ill or develops symptoms.
 - Contact the local health department about suspected COVID-19 cases or exposure.
 - The affected person should seek COVID-19 testing as soon as possible. Teams, schools, and clubs should work with parents to ensure they have access to testing through their healthcare providers or direct them to testing options.
 - Coaches/administrators must work with the local health department to identify individuals who were potentially exposed to help facilitate contact tracing. This includes, but is not limited to, athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, parents and other support personnel.
 - A team, school, or club must notify all athletes and parents/ guardians associated with the affected team regarding a positive test. Athletes and families must be reminded of proper daily health screening protocols.
 - If the affected individual participated in competitive play, the team is responsible for notifying any opponents played between the date of the positive test and 2 days prior to the onset of symptoms. If the teams, schools, or clubs reside in different counties, the health departments in each county should be notified to help facilitate effective contact tracing.
 - An individual who tests positive for COVID-19, whether symptomatic or asymptomatic, must not return to sport activities until a documented medical exam is performed clearing the individual to return to play. The documented medical exam must specifically include an assessment of the cardiac/heart risk of high-intensity exercise due to the potential of myocarditis occurring in COVID-19 patients. More information on this issue can be found at <https://www.acc.org/latest-in-cardiology/articles/2020/07/13/13/37/returning-to-play-after-coronavirus-infection>.
 - Follow protocol for cleaning and disinfecting if a COVID-19 case is identified at the venue.
 - Players, coaches, officials or other individuals who had close contact (within six feet of an infected individual for at least 15 minutes), or who had direct physical contact with the person (e.g., who were coughed on or sneezed on by the infected person), must self-quarantine for 14 days following exposure based on CDC guidance (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html>). Individuals may return to play afterward if they have not had any COVID-19 symptoms.
- Facial coverings are required under the Sports Order: At minimum facial coverings should be cloth/fabric and cover an individual’s nose, mouth, and chin.
 - CDC does not recommend the use of gaiters or face shields. Evaluation of these face covers is on-going but effectiveness is unknown at this time.

Requirements for Coaches:

- For out-of-state travel, follow the COVID-19 guidance of the state and local public health jurisdiction to which the team is traveling. Also be aware of Ohio’s Travel Advisories

<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/families-and-individuals/COVID-19-Travel-Advisory/COVID-19-Travel-Advisory>).

- Coaches and other personnel must wear face masks at all times, including when arriving and departing the facility and during active play.
 - CDC does not recommend the use of gaiters or face shields; evaluation of these face covers is on-going but effectiveness is unknown at this time.
 - Under the state's Sports Order, at minimum facial coverings (masks) should be cloth/fabric and cover an individual's nose, mouth, and chin.
- Limit day-of roster to 20 dressed players.
- Sanitize equipment as often as time permits.

Requirements for Players:

- Conduct daily symptom assessments before each practice or contest.
- No congregating before or after practices or games is permitted.
- Do not share equipment, towels, facial coverings, water bottles, other drinks or food. If equipment must be shared, proper sanitation must be performed between users.
- All players must sanitize their hands should their gloves be removed before and after warm-ups and at period breaks.
- All those on the bench shall observe social distancing of six feet.
- Players who are not one of the six (6) players on the ice and all bench personnel shall wear facial coverings.

Requirements for Facility Hosts:

- Review the requirements within the [Responsible Restart Ohio Guide for Youth, Collegiate, Amateur, Club and Professional Sports](#).
- Inform the local health district when events are scheduled and establish a plan to handle those persons who fail a symptom assessment or temperature check or exhibit signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- Limit sideline personnel to participants, coaches, medical staff and game-day staff.
- If possible, provide designated space (locker room, classroom, etc.) for officials' pregame and post-game activities. If the designated space cannot accommodate six-foot social distancing of all officials, then a separate space should be provided where officials can observe six-foot social distancing and be removed from spectator/team interaction.
- Clearly review prior to the contest mandates, best practices and school/host facility policies with visiting team administrators and/or coaches and officials as they relate to, but are not limited to, parking; entrances and exits; medical care; spectators; ticketing; locker rooms/showers; athletic training rooms and restrooms; water; towels; equipment, and shelters in the event there is inclement weather.
- Designate a Compliance Officer who is responsible for compliance with the Ohio Health Director's Sports Order.
- Follow Responsible Restart Ohio Guidance for Restaurants for concession stands (<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/responsible/Restaurants-and-Bars.pdf>).

Requirements for Spectators:

- Conduct daily symptom assessments before each contest.

- No congregating before or after practices or games is permitted.
- Six-foot social distancing must be maintained between individuals/family groups.
- Facial coverings are required unless exceptions can be met as listed in Ohio Health Director's Sports Order.

Requirements for Officials:

- Facial coverings must be worn at all times with the exception of active officiating or warm up.
- Take your temperature prior to attending your competition. If temperature is above 100.4 or you do not feel well, notify your contracted school immediately.
- No congregating before or after games is permitted.
- Six-foot social distancing required during pre- and post-game conferences and during stoppage of play during contests.
- Facial coverings must be worn at all times with the exception of active officiating, and warm-up.
- Do not shake hands or fist bump other officials, players or coaches.

2020 NFHS RULES RECOMMENDATIONS (No Required Modifications)

Players' Benches (1-9-1)

- Maintain social distancing as much as possible when on the bench.
- Limit bench personnel to observe social distancing of six feet or greater.

Penalty Benches (1-10-1)

- Limit essential personnel to maintain social distancing between personnel and participating players.

Team Captains (2-2-1, 2-2-4 and 2-2-5)

- Captains must maintain social distancing when talking or conferring with an official.
- Social distancing must be maintained during pre-game meeting between captains and head coaches.

Protective Equipment (3-4-2 and 3-4-4)

- Cloth face coverings are permissible.
 - Under the state's Sports Order, at minimum facial coverings (masks) should be cloth/fabric and cover an individual's nose, mouth, and chin.
- Plastic shields covering the entire face, unless it is integrated into the face mask/attached on the inside of the mask and clear, are not permissible.
 - Plastic shields are not an acceptable alternative to a cloth mask. CDC does not recommend the use of face shields as evaluation of them is on-going, but effectiveness is unknown at this time.
- Athletes should refrain from removing mouthguards while on the ice.
 - If mouthguards are removed on the sideline or in the bench area, the athlete should use hand sanitizer after replacing the mouthguard.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for Coaches:

- Communicate your guidelines in a clear manner to students and parents prior to events with reminders at intervals.

- Consider conducting workouts in “pods” of same students always training and rotating together in practice to ensure more limited exposure if someone develops an infection.
- Keep accurate records of those athletes and staff who attend each practice and contests in case contact tracing is needed.
- At a minimum, before and after every practice or contest, sanitize equipment as often as time permits with an EPA approved sanitizer for emerging pathogens.
- Consider limiting contests against only teams in your local area or, if out-of-state, against teams located in counties that are contiguous to Ohio.
- Should not share clipboards, whiteboards, dry erase boards or any other equipment used for coaching purposes.

Recommendations for Players:

- Arrive at the facility dressed in partial or full uniform and plan to leave the facility in partial or full uniform.
- Consider making each student responsible for their own supplies and ensure distancing of equipment to avoid cross contamination.
- Students should wear their own appropriate workout clothing (do not share clothing), and individual clothing/towels should be washed and cleaned after every workout.
- Hand sanitizer should be plentiful, in plain sight and easily accessible at all contests and practices.
- Athletes should tell coaches immediately when they are not feeling well.
- Cloth face coverings/masks are permitted, if an individual prefers to wear one. Cloth face coverings/masks are not required (*NFHS Rule 4-1-4*) while engaged in active play. State and local requirements for face coverings are to be followed when not actively engaged in play.
- Bring your own water bottle.

Recommendations for Officials:

- Arrive at the facility dressed in partial or full uniform and plan to leave the facility in partial or full uniform.
- Bring personal hand sanitizer. Wash hands frequently.
- Do not share equipment.
- Follow social distancing guidelines. Consider six feet minimum distance when talking to others (players, coaches, other officials).
- Electronic whistles are permitted, if an official prefers to use one, but are not required.
- Cloth face coverings/masks/shields are permitted, if an individual prefers to wear one.
 - Under state guidance, officials must wear face masks at all times except when on the field/court of play during games and practices to allow the use of whistles, and except for other allowable exceptions under the state’s Sports Order.
- Gloves are permissible.

Recommendations for Parents:

(A family’s role in maintaining safety guidelines for themselves and others):

- Make sure your child and immediate household members are free from illness before participating in practice and competition (if there is doubt stay home).
- Provide personal items for your child and clearly label them.
- Disinfect your student’s personal equipment after each game or practice.

- Educate yourself on the risks and benefits of athletic participation in the time of COVID and ensure you and your athlete are aware of the guidance surrounding athletic events.

Recommendations for Facility Hosts:

- If applicable, stagger the entry of all participants, coaches, officials, student game-day auxiliary groups and spectators to adhere to six-foot social distancing.
- Consider multiple points of entry to help ensure there is six-foot social distancing.
- Use contact-less payments where possible.
- Bench water may be provided by the facility host, but the visiting team/participants should supply their own coolers unless agreed upon by the facility host. If used, water coolers shall be sanitized prior to use and frequently during the contest and disposable one-time-use cups shall be utilized.
- Limit official's table to essential personnel only and demonstrate social distancing as much as possible.
- Appoint an individual(s) who is responsible for assisting the host facility manager(s) in logging all incidents and action plans when mandates have not been followed and/or incidents occur; logging recommendations for improving the host facilities' game-day strategies, and creating reports on said items that were logged.

OHSAA Postseason Note

Potential options may be considered regarding the District and State Tournament games/format depending upon the status of COVID-19.

A Note on Public Health Issues

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Ohio Governor, Ohio General Assembly, Ohio Department of Health and/or the local health district will offer guidance as to whether to close a school or university due to a public health issue. Local decisions can also be made by the local health authority or each board of education/governing board.

Helpful Links *These resources are provided to guide operations during this Covid-19 pandemic.*

- Ohio Department of Health – Coronavirus (COVID-19): <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/responsible-restart-ohio/>
- Centers for Disease Control – Coronavirus (COVID-19): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- National Athletic Trainers Association – Coronavirus (COVID-19): <https://www.nata.org/practice-patient-care/health-issues/covid-19-coronavirus>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Emergency Preparedness and Response: <http://emergency.cdc.gov/planning/>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Preparedness for All Hazards: https://www.cdc.gov/phpr/documents/ahpg_fi_nal_march_2013.pdf
- Ohio Department of Health Guidelines and Publications: <https://odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/home/>