

# HOCKEY IS BACK



*USA Hockey is excited to see ice rinks open so that players, coaches, officials, parents and administrators can enjoy the game we all love. USA Hockey recommends the following risk mitigation strategies for all stakeholders to promote health and safety during the COVID-19 pandemic. These recommendations are not intended to replace local and state government orders.*

## HOCKEY ASSOCIATIONS

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- ◆ Designate a person or group, to serve as a liaison with your ice rink facility, as the point of contact and a resource for COVID-19 state and local guidelines.
- ◆ Develop a plan for reporting a positive COVID case and for exposure to an infected individual. Click here to find your local health department for guidance: <https://www.cdc.gov/publichealthgateway/healthdirectories/index.html>
- ◆ Know your facility's safety measures and encourage 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
- ◆ Consider keeping an attendance log for contact tracing.
- ◆ Consider screening questions and temperature checks for members attending on-ice sessions if your facility is not already doing so (see screening section below).
- ◆ Determine the number of players and coaches that can be on the ice at one time and keep groups together for subsequent sessions.
- ◆ Coaches and officials may want to consider the use of electronic whistles.

## GENERAL RISK MITIGATION STRATEGIES

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### Screening

- ◆ **STAY HOME** if you are sick or have been exposed to an infected individual.
- ◆ With permission from your rink owner/operator, set up a station at the rink entrance to ask questions and check body temperature. If anyone answers “yes” to any of the questions below or has a temperature above 100.4 Fahrenheit, they should not be allowed to participate.
  1. Have you or anyone in your household had a sore throat, cough, chills, body aches, shortness of breath, loss of smell, loss of taste, fever at or greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit in the last 21 days?
  2. Have you or anyone in your household been tested for COVID-19?
  3. To the best of your knowledge have you been in close proximity to any individual who tested positive for COVID-19?
  4. Any individual answering “yes” or having a temperature above 100.4 should follow their physician’s recommendations for when it is safe to return to activity.

### 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.
- ◆ Do not share water bottles, towels or other equipment. Mark them clearly so you know which one is yours.
- ◆ Clean/disinfect equipment after each use.

### Social Distancing

- ◆ Maintain social distancing measures (6 ft. apart) whenever possible off the ice.
- ◆ Consider dressing at home to avoid locker rooms; only use locker rooms if social distancing can be maintained.
- ◆ Limit group discussions so players are not in close proximity for extended periods of time.
- ◆ Do not use benches unless social distancing can be maintained.
- ◆ Coaches, parents and spectators should follow social distancing measures.
- ◆ Discourage unnecessary physical contact, such as high fives, handshakes, fist bumps, or hugs.
- ◆ Consider alternative programming:
  1. Maximize ice space by utilizing stations.
  2. Play games, if allowed, 3v3 or 4v4 with smaller team rosters to allow for more space on the ice, within the player benches, and locker rooms.

## **Personal Protective Equipment**

- ◆ 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.**
- ◆ Wear a face covering/mask when entering/exiting the facility and within the facility when not on the ice.
- ◆ Coaches, parents and spectators should all wear a face covering/mask while indoors.
- ◆ Wearing a face covering/mask during on-ice practice or games is a personal choice. Some state and municipal guidelines require a face covering/mask for indoor athletic facilities. There are some potential disadvantages of wearing a face covering/mask during high intensity exercise:
  - The CDC recognizes that face coverings/masks may be uncomfortable to wear during activity and may hinder breathing especially during strenuous activity or when they become wet:
    - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/youth-sports.html>
    - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html>
  - The WHO does not recommend that face coverings/masks be worn during strenuous physical activity:
    - <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/myth-busters>
  - Preliminary evidence shows that wearing a face covering/mask can decrease oxygen intake and increase carbon dioxide retention during exercise with a mask:
    - <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2666506920300250?via%3Dihub>
  - If you choose to wear a face covering/mask or your local orders require them, please note that there are many types, styles and materials used for face coverings/masks:
    - Do not wear filtering facepiece respirators (N95, FFP1, FFP2) during exercise. These masks are reserved for frontline healthcare workers.
    - Choose a face covering/mask that fits comfortably and allows you to breathe during exercise. You may have to experiment with different options, but the material type can affect viral control. Two layers of material are considered sufficient.
    - Have multiple face coverings/masks available so you can change them when they become saturated. A wet face covering/mask can impair breathing and possibly increase viral transmission.
    - Wash your hands before putting on and taking off your face covering/mask.
    - Avoid touching the front of your face covering/mask or your face beneath the face covering/mask.
    - Wash your face coverings/masks after each use.

<https://blogs.bmj.com/bjism/2020/06/12/should-people-wear-a-face-mask-during-exercise-what-should-clinicians-advise/>

## **FOCUS ON THE PRESENT TO ENSURE A BRIGHT FUTURE**

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- ◆ We all need to do our part and follow the guidelines to keep us as safe as possible.
- ◆ Programming may look different, but this offers an opportunity for creativity and high-quality player development.
- ◆ Sports participation promotes a healthy lifestyle through physical, social, emotional, and mental well-being.
- ◆ HAVE FUN!

