



This information is provided to schools to help conduct a High School hockey season. The intent of this information is to minimize and reduce risk as much as possible. As such, parents and athletes should discuss the risks and determine if these provisions allow participation for their child.

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.

The situation with COVID-19 continues to change and these considerations may quickly become outdated. Continue to keep up with the latest from the CDC and your local health department. A coach and the Athletic Director within the program should be designated to be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns.

Requirements for Hockey to occur:

- Face coverings are currently REQUIRED for indoor activities where physical distancing is not possible. ***This is mandated by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, which has been granted that authority by the state legislature: MCL 333.2253***
- **Face coverings are required in hockey.** This includes all times during active participation and all times during non-active participation when 6 feet of physical distance cannot be maintained.
- There are no provisions in the MDHHS mandate on facial coverings for medical intolerance reasons or medical waivers. This is not an MHSAA regulation, and thus the MHSAA has no legal authority to waive or modify this emergency order from HHS. They will take time to get used to, as they can be uncomfortable and increase the perceived effort of exercise, use your preseason practices to adjust to this mandate.
- In practice and training sessions in all regions of the state, this same guidance applies.
- Traditional cloth/fabric masks, gaiters, affixed cage or bubble plastic shields and cloth/fabric helmet attachments located inside the face mask (all of which must cover the nose and mouth) are allowed.
- It is recommended that cloth and fabric face coverings be worn in addition to a splash or spit guard.
- A clear plastic “bubble” hockey shield **DOES NOT ALONE** meet the requirement for a facial covering. It must be accompanied by either cloth/fabric facial covering or a plastic covering or “splash guard” covering the air holes at the bottom of a plastic “bubble” shield.
- Face coverings/masks cannot alter or modify the required HECC certification of helmets, cages, shields or other hockey protective equipment.
- Face coverings are currently required for all spectators, coaches and event workers.
- All other NFHS and MHSAA requirements including uniform, neck guard, mouth guard are still in effect.
- All other NFHS and MHSAA playing rules shall be enforced.
- No scrimmages (*other than within your own team*). The only occasions where students from different schools can be together is for official games.

Equipment:

- **Face masks (NFHS 3-4-2)** – Plastic shields covering the entire face (unless integrated into the face mask, attached on the inside of the face mask, and clear without the presence of any tint) shall not be allowed during the contest.
- **Tooth and mouth protectors (NFHS 3-4-4)** – If mouthguards are removed on the sidelines or bench area, the athlete should use hand sanitizer each time after touching the mouthguard.
- **Water bottles** – Players should use their own, clearly marked water bottles, there should be no sharing of bottles during games or practices.
- **Hockey helmet** – Players should use their own helmet
- **Hockey equipment** – Players should use their own equipment.
- **Need to have shared equipment sanitized** – Coaches must sanitize shared equipment before and after each practice.

Practice Guidelines/Protocols:

- Team Meetings prior to Practice- Observe social distancing/ wearing of face masks required.
- Handouts/Rule Books- use of online materials, emails, sport team apps and other electronic communication is recommended.
- Hydration/Food, Snacks- All players must provide their own water bottles or drinks and snacks. There is to be no sharing of food or drink. Also, public drinking facilities should not be used. Coaches/teams should not provide food or drink to players unless it is individualized to each player and/or commercially prepared or prepackaged.
- When engaging in multiple drills or stations, ensure that players are properly spaced out and there is no congregating of players while waiting or to perform drills.
- There should be a minimum distance of 6 feet between each individual at all times when not in active participation.
- There should be no shared athletic equipment (towels, clothing, neck guards, masks or specific equipment) between student-athletes.
- No player or coach spitting – There should not be ANY spitting on or off the ice while in the rink.
- Students should wear their own appropriate clothing (do not share clothing.)
- Individual drills requiring the use of athletic equipment are permissible, but the equipment should be cleaned prior to use by the next individual. Cleaning/ sanitizing supplies should be readily available on site.
- Coach Modeling- Coaches should be great role models for their players and observe all of the stay safe, stay healthy guidelines. Coaches should promote physical distancing on-ice, while keeping players active and engaged at all times.
- Player habits – Coaches should work to continue to reinforce safe and healthy habits. This includes staying away from touching their face, social distancing of 6 feet between individuals, no spitting on or off the ice and constant hand washing.
- Hand sanitizer and/or sanitizing wipes – Players, coaches, and officials are encouraged to provide their own hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) and/or sanitizing wipes. Coaches and other team officials should have this on the bench.
- Coaches should provide breaks often, where participants can sanitize regularly.
- Players should have a separate mask that they use for practice/games, and one they wear when not training or competing. These masks need to be washed regularly and often.
- Team issued uniforms and equipment must be sanitized before handing out and if possible, players would be advised to use their own equipment or keep it for the duration of the season.

Pre-Workout & Pre-Game Screening:

- All coaches and students should be screened daily for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 prior to participating, including a temperature check. This check may take place onsite or be completed and verified prior to arrival onsite (at home, for example). Anyone with a temperature greater than 100.3 degrees should not participate and be sent home. Responses to screening questions for each person should be recorded and stored of everyone present in case a student develops COVID-19. These records must be kept confidential. Any person displaying symptoms of COVID:
 - Should not be allowed to participate
 - Should self-isolate and contact his or her primary care provider or other health-care professional.
- Continue to remind and insist that coaches and students disclose symptoms so all schools can compete safely. Involve local health departments if positive cases of COVID are discovered. Vulnerable adult individuals should not coach, supervise or participate in any competitions or workouts. School districts will make the decision on vulnerable individuals.
- If on site temp checks are conducted, coaches should record temp checks with infrared thermometers prior to practice or games. Temperatures should be recorded on a log sheet or via software/applications.
- A link to the MHSAA COVID Tracking Form is provided: [COVID MONITORING FORM](#)
- Schools may also develop their own online survey (Google Forms, or other software/applications) used for contact tracing. Many schools currently are utilizing this system for daily attendance, with parents providing the information. This may be something you can develop through your school system. You may also consider developing a QR Code for players to access forms/applications without touching pens/paper.
- Below are typical questions to ask daily before participation:
 1. *Date (that days date)*
 2. *Last Name*
 3. *First Name*

4. *Have you been diagnosed with Covid-19 in the past 14 days?*
5. *Are you experiencing symptoms typically associated with Covid-19 such as: rash, diarrhea, fever, coughing, fatigue, headache, chills, loss of taste/smell or respiratory distress?*
6. *Have you been in contact with anyone who has a suspected or confirmed diagnosis of Covid-19 in the past 14 days?*
7. *Have you taken medicine for a fever or body aches within the past 24 hours?*
8. *If you have answered "YES" or your temperature is 100.3 degrees or higher you are not able to participate in today's activities. Please isolate and contact your primary care physician for direction.*
9. *By submitting I am certifying that all information supplied is accurate and true.*

Competition/Game Guidelines:

- In ice hockey host sites must strictly enforce spectator capacity limits on a game-by-game basis.
- Host sites must actively manage sanitation and cleaning protocols during transition times between games, such as during a JV-varsity doubleheader or between games/sessions of a showcase when a number of teams rotate through a rink during the day.
- Event administration and venues must consider proper scheduling, seating areas, and crowd entry and exit to facilitate needed sanitizing and physical distancing protocols.
- No more than two teams should be in the same rink/facility/ice surface at the same time. Teams awaiting play in a subsequent game should not enter the same rink that a game is going on until that game is over, the facility has been cleaned and the previous teams have left.
- Unique and creative scheduling of multi-team showcases or tournaments need to be considered including using multiple days, multiple facilities and/or geographic match ups.
- Provide clear instruction to teams in advance of contests about entrance and exit points of the rink facility.
- It is strongly recommended that visiting schools/teams provide ahead of time, a roster and list of players, coaches and team personnel that will be attending the game. This will assist the home team and rink on the entrance protocols for that rink and game and expedite visiting team arrival.
- Provide clear instruction regarding suggested arrival time and protocols (including temp. screening, contact tracing, online forms or waivers) for rink, locker room access and restrooms.
- When using the restroom, maintain social distancing while waiting and avoid congregating in the rest room.
- Arrival of teams and players may be restricted to a time frame prior to ice time (for example – entry into rink no earlier than 30 minutes prior to ice time) This must be coordinated with your rink, athletic director and rink manager.
- Teams may need to change prior to departing for the game or when arriving in vehicles, as locker rooms may not be available until a defined time prior to game ice.
- Each team is responsible for its own hand sanitizer and its own med kit.
- All players are encouraged to have their own hand sanitizer in addition to what coach has available.
- Consideration should be given to limiting or restricting access to warm up areas or other shared areas. Off -ice warm up may have to be done elsewhere, including outside.
- During off-ice warm up - Coaches are responsible for ensuring physical distancing is maintained.
- No post-game handshake lines. Players should line up on their respective blue lines and raise their sticks to the other team immediately following the conclusion of the game. This stick salute should be done after each game.
- All players shall bring their own water bottle or drinks. Water bottles must not be shared.
- The scorer's/announcer's box should be staffed by NO MORE than two persons. A penalty box may be staffed by no more than 1 person and it may be important to have no one present given the space constraints. Physical distancing should be practiced and facial coverings/masks MUST be worn by off ice officials at all times.
- Only essential personnel are permitted on the players benches. These are defined as players, coaches and athletic trainers. Limiting of personnel normally behind the bench may have to occur. It is recommended that no more than 4 coaches or essential bench personnel are behind the bench and this number may have to be reduced given the parameters of some bench areas. All others, i.e., managers, video people, media, photographers, etc. are considered non- essential personnel and will need to watch the games from other areas away from the bench.
- On ice award ceremonies may have to be modified or eliminated for tournaments and other awards. Functions may be held following physical distancing protocol and local guidelines.
- Competitors must only use their own personal equipment.

General Considerations:

- Focus on one game first and build from there. There is a mindset switch that needs to occur. We need to operate from the standpoint that we do not have Hockey at this time. We have nothing, but want to build on that to get to something using common sense, care and caution. Start with a single game and build from there, not from an invite, tournament, showcase and working backwards. The spirit and intent of the rule is important to consider when planning. Everyone needs to be responsible in order for us to come back to Hockey. There is not a specific restriction on invitationals or showcases, but the strong recommendation is NOT to conduct them early on in the season. The guidance is very clear that there are to be no large-scale events early in the season. Make sure that you can effectively administer a regular game first.
- The latest research and data inform us all that COVID is not being spread during the school day, at athletic practices or during games between teammates and opponents. However, we are learning that many activities loosely connected to schools and school sports are creating COVID challenges for school districts.
- Events such as team dinners, gatherings at homes and restaurants following games and other team-connected but non-athletic social gatherings on the weekends with little to no mitigation measures of face coverings and social distancing is causing COVID numbers in Michigan to increase. Coaches and schools should work to limit or eliminate these gatherings as much as possible to mitigate spread of Covid.
- Strong and regular communication between a school hockey coach and the school athletic director are key when navigating this pandemic and how it will impact the hockey season.
- A coach should strongly communicate with the rink and rink manager to ensure that they are aware of new and ever-changing rink policies on directives such as: temp. checks, contact tracing, check in procedures, communication with other teams.
- Coaches need to also encourage parents and players to use best communication practices with all involved including parents, families and players. This may include a less punitive and less restrictive practice policy that allows players to miss because of health and mental health issues (Covid or not). A safe health and well-being policy using care, caution and common sense will help a hockey team in the long run, this year more than ever.
- Prepare for changes, postponements and work to be flexible in your scheduling including potentially changing or cancelling games because of an unexpected, difficult and last-minute decision on a game or because of a quarantine situation.
- By MDHHS guidance, indoor concession stands may be restricted from opening and you will need to communicate with your rink, facility and opponent to ensure that communication occurs.
- Advance messaging to teams, spectators, media – Visiting school teams and spectators are expected to comply with the host school strategies for COVID risk mitigation.
- Provide notice to all attendees, using web sites and social media to outline procedures for the event.
- Provide PA announcements to reinforce key site requirements and reminders of guidelines.
- Consider livestream options for spectators who cannot attend in person – Review and communicate plans to all, consider camera location(s) and MHSAA, state and local policies.
- Seating capacity/configuration – Teams, spectators, media, medical, event personnel. Consider tape or paint as a guide, communicate in advance and create signage.
- Consider designating an event management team – to include a health professional. This group could have the authority to modify, restrict, postpone or cancel the event based on public health risk or other factors.
- Create communication plan – Attendees can receive an emergency notification, if necessary. Think about how you will address and communicate a positive COVID test of an attendee before, during or after the event.
- Attendees – Consider grouping people into tiers from essential to non-essential and decide which tiers will be allowed at an event:
- Athletic Training services – Athletic trainers in high schools are positioned to play a vital role as sports return following this pandemic. As health-care professionals, they can take lead roles in developing and implementing infection control policy throughout the school. School administrators should partner with athletic trainers to develop and implement infection control policy throughout the school.
- Transportation to events – Schools must consider social distancing requirements when scheduling contests and events for the fall. Masking and social distancing (as required by state or local health departments) will need to be maintained on buses/vans. Thus, multiple buses/vans and/or parental/guardian transportation will potentially be needed.

- While there is no restriction on travel to out of state opponents that follow MHSAA rules on such travel, it would be important to note that all MHSAA and State of Michigan rules would apply at all times to MHSAA hockey teams.
- Travel considerations may need to be cleared in advance, this includes overnight trips which need to be approved by your school athletic director well in advance and should not be assumed to occur as they normally have been done.

NFHS Hockey Rules Considerations

- In support of the Guidance for Opening Up High School Athletics and Activities, the NFHS Ice Hockey Rules Committee offers this document for state associations to consider whether any possible rules could be altered for the 2020-21 season. 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.

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.

Ice Hockey Rules Considerations

Players' Benches (1-9-1) - Maintain social distancing as much as possible when on the bench. Limit bench personal to observe social distancing of 6 feet or greater.

Penalty Benches (1-10-1) Limit to essential personnel and maintain social distancing from personnel and participating players.

Team Captains (2-2-1, 2-2-4, and 2-2-5) Captains need to maintain social distancing when talking or conferring with a referee. Maintain social distance during the pre-game meeting with captains and head coaches.

Protective Equipment Face masks (3-4-2) - Cloth face coverings are permissible and may be required by State Association and/or other State health mandates.

Face masks (3-4-2) - Plastic shields covering the entire face (unless integrated into the face mask, attached on the inside of the face mask, and clear without the presence of any tint) shall not be allowed during the contest.

Each state association may adopt other playing/administrative rules for ice hockey for the 2020-21 season that would decrease exposure to respiratory droplets and COVID-19.

- **Tooth and mouth protectors (3-4-4)** - State associations should develop statements instructing athletes to refrain from the removal of mouthguards while on the playing rink. If mouthguards are removed on the sidelines or bench area, the athlete should use hand sanitizer each time after touching the mouthguard.

General Ice Hockey Considerations

- Before, during and after the contest, players, coaches, game officials, team personnel and game administration officials should wash and sanitize their hands as often as possible.
- Suspend pregame protocol of shaking hands during introductions/pregame meeting.
- Suspend postgame protocol of shaking hands.
- Maintain social distancing of 6 feet or greater on the bench when possible.
- Everyone should have their own beverage container that is not shared.