

RETURN TO HOCKEY

VERSION 11 – SEPTEMBER 21, 2021



CANADA



RETURN **to** HOCKEY

COVID-19 RESPONSE



SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Hockey New Brunswick has worked in conjunction with Hockey Canada and the Government of New Brunswick to ensure that in every phase of our return to hockey the safety of our Players, Coaches, Officials, Administrators and volunteers are at the center of our plan and decision making. This plan focuses on making the return to hockey fluid while enhancing the experience. The information in this document is not intended or implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment, as the circumstances are constantly changing.

This document is intended for use by our member Associations and Leagues. Players, Coaches, Officials and administrators will all play a critical role in combating the spread of COVID-19, both on and off the ice.

Hockey New Brunswick would like to thank our Return to Hockey work groups for their commitment and efforts in the creation of our Return to Hockey document.

CHECKLIST TO SUCCESS

✓ REVIEW & FOLLOW

- Hockey New Brunswick Return to Hockey plan
- Hockey Canada Safety & Protocol Guidelines
- Government of New Brunswick, Public Health Guidelines

✓ PLAN

- Each Minor Hockey Association to assign a 'Communications Officer'
- Each Minor Hockey team to assign a 'Team Liaison'
- Make all team staff aware of their responsibilities
- Meet with facility, parents / guardians and participants
- Procedures if participants are sick

✓ AT THE FACILITY

- Follow Hockey New Brunswick Return to Hockey plan
- Follow facility guidelines
- Practice responsible hygiene
- HAVE FUN!

SECTION 2: DISCLAIMER

The information included in this document is current to the time of publishing and is aligned with the Government of New Brunswick's Public Health Guidelines. However, recommendations may change depending on local, municipal or facility specific guidelines.

Where anything within this document conflicts with Public Health guidelines, members must comply with Public Health and adapt as required. As information changes, efforts will be made to amend this document when necessary, and to circulate the revisions to the Hockey New Brunswick membership.

SECTION 3: COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

Positive and open communication will be an important part of returning safely to the rink. Minor hockey associations and leagues will want to ensure they understand what controls and guidelines are in place. This information must be passed along to administrators, officials, team staff, volunteers, parents and players in advance to ensure the return to hockey and facility use is enjoyable.

Each Minor Hockey Association will assign a 'Communications Officer' who will be responsible to ensure all updated and relevant information is passed on to everyone within their jurisdiction.

In addition to the Minor Hockey Association 'Communications Officer', each team will have a 'Team Liaison', that will work in cooperation with the Minor Hockey Association's Communication Officer.

- Ensuring any COVID-19 cases are reported as required by the public health authority, Hockey New Brunswick, hockey association, league and facility.
- Provide updates to Association on the Hockey New Brunswick documents.
- In collaboration with facility operator determine how proof of vaccination will be completed for participants as well as spectators.

'TEAM LIAISON' RESPONSIBILITIES MAY INCLUDE:

- Ongoing communication with Minor Hockey Association's 'Communications Officer' on guidelines and updates.
- Ensure proof of vaccination is provided for participants and spectators 12 and older.
- Securely store and maintain a 'checklist' showing members vaccination status.

The appointment of a 'Team Liaison' is the responsibility of the individual team. The position can be an already existing member of the Coaching Staff, the Team Safety representative, Team Manager, or a parent.

MINOR HOCKEY ASSOCIATION 'COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER' RESPONSIBILITIES MAY INCLUDE:

- Monitoring all relevant updates from Hockey New Brunswick, Hockey Canada and the Government of New Brunswick.
- Communicating with local facilities on guidelines and updates.
- Ensuring teams are following the prevention guidelines set out by Hockey New Brunswick.



SECTION 4: PREVENTATIVE HEALTH MEASURES

This resource provides an overview of ways protective health measures can be incorporated by Minor Hockey Associations, teams and leagues.



VACCINATION

As of September 22, 2021, the Government of NB requires that everyone 12 years and over must show proof of vaccination to access certain events, of which all Hockey New Brunswick sanctioned activities are included. Additional information on the GNB vaccination requirements is available online:

GNB COVID-19 vaccination.

- Proof of vaccination must include two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine. Organizers do not need to validate timing between or after doses (not required to wait 14 days after 2nd dose).
- Proof of vaccination applies to players, coaches, volunteers, officials, and spectators who are 12 and over attending Hockey New Brunswick sanctioned activities.
- Children born between July 1st, 2009 and December 1st 2009 may continue participating and have until October 31st to get their second vaccine. It is expected that there will be a transition period allowed for children born in 2010 who will be turning 12 in early 2022, further details will be communicated at a later time.
- In addition to on-ice sanctioned activities, proof of vaccination is required for indoor organized gatherings (conferences, meetings and workshops) as well as indoor team building activities and off-ice sanctioned activities.
- Proof of a negative test cannot be used instead of vaccination for participants, volunteers or spectators.
- Children under 12 years old with parents/guardians who refuse to provide proof of vaccination must be allowed to continue their activities however parents are not allowed to enter any indoor sport or recreation venue until they provide proof of vaccination.
- For regular season activities where participants are consistent, proof of vaccination does not need to be provided each time they attend the sanctioned activity, it can be done upon registration, or at the participants first ice session. However, the team liaison, manager or coach must be able to demonstrate compliance if asked (checklist). Parent / guardians vaccination status can be included on the checklist. A **checklist template** is available online.
- Checklists or any other documentation showing whether a person is vaccinated, unvaccinated or medically exempted needs to be stored securely by the team liaison.
- While team personnel will not store immunization records, participants or their parent / guardian must have a copy of their records available if requested.
- For proof of vaccination, organizers are required to see an official record of immunization with a piece of Government issued identification (driver's license, Medicare card, birth certificate, etc.). A record of immunization can be obtained from **MyHealthNB** portal, the RHA clinic or pharmacy that gave the vaccine, a record from Public Health, or proof of vaccination from another jurisdiction. A copy or picture of the original is acceptable.
- Individuals 12 years and over who cannot receive a vaccine because of a medical exemption, will be required to show a **medical certificate of exemption** signed by a healthcare provider.
- Due to privacy regulations Minor Hockey Associations / teams cannot keep records of immunization records. Once proof is provided, the team liaison must record the vaccination status of the participant and parent and guardians who will be attending the sanctioned activities regularly. Spectators not included on the checklist must provide proof of vaccination when attending any games or practices. Depending on the situation, it is reasonable for facility operators to expect Minor Hockey Associations or teams to oversee the validation of proof of vaccination of their participants. Organizations are expected to work collaboratively with facility owners and operators to ensure compliance to the vaccination requirement.



STEPS FOR DEALING WITH COVID-19 EXPOSURE / OUTBREAK

Follow the directions provided by Public Health if a member of your team tests positive for COVID-19 or is a close contact of someone who tests positive. Public Health will provide advice regarding isolation and contact notification.

SECTION 4: PREVENTATIVE HEALTH MEASURES

Individuals are encouraged to stay home when sick and to get tested.



HAND WASHING AND RESPIRATORY HYGIENE

Promote strict hand hygiene (washing and sanitizing) before and after training.

- Wash hands after using restrooms with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.

When coughing or sneezing:

- Cough or sneeze into a tissue or the bend of the arm, not the hand.
- Dispose of any used tissues as soon as possible in a lined waste basket and wash hands.
- Avoid touching the eyes, nose or mouth with un-washed hands.



MASKS

Masks will be required by all spectators and participants in all areas of the facility, including the dressing room for players, team staff and parents as well as the player's bench for coaches and team staff.

Players, coaches and officials on the ice during games / practices will not be required to wear masks.

Children under two and individuals who are medically-exempt are not required to wear a mask.



EQUIPMENT CLEANING

Some equipment should be washed (jerseys, pant shells, socks, etc) after each session, following manufacturer guidelines.

- Players must ensure that equipment is kept clean.
- Encourage players to take equipment out of bags and dry it out after EVERY session.
- Wash all undergarments after each session.



TOWELS

Towels are on the bench under the guidance of the safety person / trainer for emergency use.

- Towels are not regular use. If a safety person / trainer uses a towel on the bench, it must be taken out of the use and washed.

- Paper towels / tissue can be kept on hand to wipe face, blow nose if on the bench.
- Garbage cans should be placed close by for disposal.



HANDSHAKES

No handshakes between teams. Referees can greet coaches, but no handshakes.



WATER BOTTLES

Players must have their own labelled water bottle, washed after each session.



SPITTING

The act of spitting directly at any player, team official or on-ice official is currently addressed under Rule 11.3, in which a match penalty is applied. In the current environment, Hockey New Brunswick encourages coaches to promote that players refrain from spitting at any time during any on-ice activities. This would also include spitting water on the ice or in the bench area.



COMMUNICATION

Host an online meeting with parents / guardians to go through recommendations and allow them to ask questions related to the preventative health measures which have been implemented.



PHYSICAL DISTANCING

- Avoid crowded places and gatherings.
- As much as possible, keeping a distance of at least 2 metres.
- Avoid common greetings, like handshakes.
- In younger divisions, limit the number of parents in the dressing room.



COVID-19 E-LEARNING

Hockey Canada has partnered with the Respect Group to create an interactive e-learning course for volunteers, specific to COVID-19 and the Safety Guidelines which Hockey Canada has created. Hockey New Brunswick requires that all coaches and team volunteers complete the online training.



SECTION 5: CONCLUSION

Since the pandemic started in March 2020, Hockey New Brunswick has worked with our members and subject-matter experts to prepare our participants in the best manner possible.

While a number of restrictions that were in place during the 2020-2021 season have been lifted, it's essential that we remain compliant with Public Health guidelines. We encourage a full understanding of these recommendations, as well as facility specific guidelines which are in place.

APPENDICES

HOCKEY CANADA SAFETY GUIDELINES / FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

<https://www.hockeycanada.ca/en-ca/exclusive/return-to-hockey/plans/safety>

GOVERNMENT OF NEW BRUNSWICK - LIVING WITH COVID-19 - PROTECTIVE HEALTH MEASURES

<https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/eco-bce/Promo/covid-19/guide-living-with-covid-19.pdf>