



GAMES: RETURNING TO THE RINKS

August 25, 2020

LIMITATIONS ON ICE HOCKEY DURING MASSACHUSETTS PHASE III, STEP 1

Frequently Asked Questions

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has issued [updated guidelines](#) related to playing youth and adult sporting activities. All available checklists and waivers for all facilities and programs are available on the state's website and posted at mahockey.org/hockeyresources.

The purpose of these FAQ's is a general overview/summary for specific questions related to games and practices in Massachusetts based upon the current guidelines. Massachusetts Hockey is the governing body for ice hockey played under USA Hockey rules and sanctions to play and do not have the authority to take any power or oversight related to these rules. This FAQ have been prepared in an effort to inform and assist the hockey community with the guidelines which the state has put in place for the safety our community.

FACE COVERINGS

What is an acceptable face covering?

[Click here](#) to review the state guidelines on what is an appropriate and approved face covering. Be aware- a face covering is NOT the same as a "face mask", which is a required piece of equipment attached to the helmet (cage or plastic shield).

Are we required to wear a face covering in the rink facilities?

Yes. You are required to wear a face covering every time you enter in the facility.

Are face coverings required in the stands, off-ice, bench area and at faceoffs?

Yes, they are required. Centers are required to wear face coverings at the faceoffs.

Can a facility refuse entrance to a person who does not follow guidelines such as wearing a face covering?

Facilities are permitted to impose any requirements they deem appropriate provided they are not in violation of state or local laws and ordinances.

Are officials/referees are required to wear face coverings on the ice?

Yes.

Is a clear face shield an acceptable face covering instead of a cloth face mask?

No. It is not acceptable instead of wearing a face mask.

Who is responsible for making sure the players are wearing their coverings on the bench and at face offs?

Enforcement of the state's guidelines is on the local boards of health, and it is expected that coaches will take steps to make sure the players are following the guidelines.



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OFF-ICE

How many spectators are allowed per player?

One spectator per player. The coach is not considered as a spectator in related to a player at the facility. No spectators are allowed for participants that are 21-years-old or older. No non-essential visitors.

Will the players be able to get dressed at the rink?

Facilities are permitted open or close locker room at their discretion and any locker rooms may only will be utilized at maximum of 50% capacity and the locker room door will be open the entire time. Locker rooms will be available for officials too.

Will teams still need locker room monitors?

Yes.

Will restrooms be available?

Yes. They have been available during every phase.

Are water fountains available?

They are available. Each facility is different if they are in use.

Will players be required to sign a waiver each time they enter the rink?

Each rink and activity organizer will have different procedures.

Who will be responsible for contact tracing?

It falls primarily on the rink with cooperation from the activity organizer working hand in hand to keep track of those entering the facility.

Who is responsible for obtaining and purchasing/paying for a COVID-19 test?

That is the responsibility of the participant and their guardians.

What happens if anyone attending a facility tests positive with COVID-19?

The rink must be deep cleaned. The rink in cooperation with the organizer must contact their local board of health and supply a list of all contacts who had proximity with the person testing positive. Person should not return to the rink or play until the symptoms are gone AND they have tested negative.

Will the facilities be extensively cleaning? Will they have enough time in between groups on the ice?

Yes. Each facility is required to engage in extensive cleaning protocols and will schedule ice accordingly to provide enough time to sanitize between groups in the facility.

What happens if a rink doesn't follow the guidelines?

That is up to the local board of health governing over the facility.



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Will USA Hockey provide a refund if the season gets canceled?

No.

If a game or practice or event gets canceled will our tuition money be refunded?

Refund policies are matters that are addressed between appointed by the activity organizer, league and/or rink you submitted your payment too. Massachusetts Hockey does not get involved with financial matters between participants and programs.

Does Mass Hockey have specific guidelines for program/associations to follow about getting back on the ice?

We have the guidelines from the state and USA Hockey available online at mahockey.org/hockeyresources.

ON-ICE

Are tournaments allowed in Massachusetts?

No tournaments are NOT allowed. Anything that involves in teams advancing and playing multiple set of games over a set period of time is NOT permitted. Ultimately, the local Board of Health in each community will determine what can take place. As of 8/21/20, the state provided the following guidance related to tournaments:

A "Tournament" is a formal contest that consists of multiple competitions or a series of games (such as a "double-header" or "play day") between multiple persons or teams, that might include multiple stages, played in a condensed period of time, such as over the course of a single day or multiple days in a row. For the avoidance of doubt, a series of games is still a tournament even if there is a lack of an overall prize, scores, eliminations, brackets, or otherwise.

Are teams allowed to travel outside of Massachusetts to play another team and/or in a tournament?

A team is allowed to travel outside of Massachusetts as long as they are aware and follow the guidelines required by the state and the state they are traveling too.

Can players play full ice and/or 3-on-3 ice hockey games?

Yes. Players can participate in full-ice games and/or 3-on-3 ice hockey with restrictions, which includes no body check, quick whistles to limit intermittent body contact and face-off's with centers wearing face coverings.

Are adults allowed to play ice hockey? Do they need to follow the same guidelines as the youth players?

Yes, and yes.

Will players need to wear a face covering while on the ice?

In accordance with the current state guidance, players at the center position are required to wear a face covering at the faceoffs. This is limited to the player taking the draw and is no longer required once the draw is completed.



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Will players be required to wear a face covering on the bench?

Yes. In accordance with the current state guidance, face coverings are required for players when on the bench.

Will officials/referees be required to wear a face covering?

Yes. In accordance with the current state guidance officials/referees are required to have a face covering on at all times.

Are players required to wear a mouthguard?

Players are required to wear a mouthguard for any USA Hockey sanctioned play for players who are 12-and-under and older.

How will spitting and other bodily fluids be handled if they are evident on the ice?

Players should refrain from spitting in the bench areas as a matter of general hygiene.

Do goalies need to wear a mask under their helmet throughout the game?

No, goalies are not required to wear a face covering while they are in the game. If they are on the bench, then they would be required to wear a face covering.

Are coaches required to wear a face covering on the ice during practice?

Yes.

Are coaches required to wear a face covering on the bench during a game?

Yes.

Will the officials and coaches/instructors use normal whistles during games/practice?

Massachusetts is encouraging the use of electronic whistles. Massachusetts Ice Hockey Officials & Massachusetts Hockey will be providing electronic whistles to purchase at cost. Expect a notification and message from them when they are available for purchase.

Will body checking be allowed at the 14U (Bantam), 15 Only, 16U (Midget), 18U Midget?

No. Body checking will NOT be allowed in Massachusetts. If someone performs a body check, they will be penalized by an official during a game played in Massachusetts.

How will officials be able to limit the body contact?

Officials will blow the whistle more quickly than traditional games to limit the scrums and close intermittent contact.

Are body checking or checking drills allowed at the 14U (Bantam), 15 Only, 16U (Midget), 18U Midget in practice?

No. Body checking will NOT be allowed in Massachusetts in game or practices.



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Will the whistle blow every time there's a battle for the puck, just like the guidance for game play has listed out?

It is anticipated that the officials will blow the whistle more quickly than traditional games to limit the scrums and close intermittent contact.

If there is more than one player in the penalty box, how will they be expected to social distance?

The player will be asked to sit socially distanced on the bench of their team until their penalty has concluded.

Is there enough room on the benches to provide social distancing?

It is expected that facilities will make appropriate accommodations to extend the benches to follow the guidelines.

How many players are allowed on the ice during practice?

The cohorts' size of 10 is limited to those groups in sports that are limited to Phase 2 of the Massachusetts Youth Sports Guidelines. Ice Hockey in Massachusetts with appropriate modifications has been able to get to Phase 3, which includes games. As a result, the limit is 25 players per playing surface.

It is the belief and opinion that a standard ice sheet is a "larger playing surface" area as described in the guidance, and therefore, you can have more than one group of 25, provided you have a 14-foot distance between them in accordance with the guidance. As a result, this would permit two groups of up to a total of 25 players + coaches.

In order to do so, each group would need to be separated from the beginning to the end of the session. No combined team activities, such as line drills, etc.

Should the local board of health have a stricter interpretation, programs must follow that guidance at a local level.

What happens if a player/team does not comply with the changes?

The facility has the ability to ensure that any on-ice activity is compliant with the state guidance. If they are not in compliance, the rink risks being shut down by their local board of health.

Will allotted times available for practices and games remain the same?

That will be up to the facility which is scheduling the ice assignments in accordance with the cleaning/maintenance schedule needed to adhere to the guidelines.

Will there be handshakes at the end of a game?

No. Teams have the option to line up on the blue line and "stick salute" if they desire, but it is not required.

Will those with a medical exemption note be allowed to participate without wearing a face covering?

Massachusetts guidance allows for those who have a medical condition or disability to be exempted from the face covering requirement.



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Will there be a National Bound State Championship Tournament?

We hope to host National Bound and non-National Bound state championship tournaments this season, but have not yet made an official determination. Currently, tournaments are not allowed in Massachusetts with higher-risk sports.

HOCKEY OUTSIDE OF MASSACHUSETTS

Will players from outside of Massachusetts be able to come play in Massachusetts?

Yes, as long as any out of state player is following the guidance required of the state they are entering.

Will players from outside of Massachusetts be allowed on rosters/teams who are based in Massachusetts?

Yes, as long as any out of state player is following the guidance required of the state they are entering.

These FAQ's are subject to change depending upon changes or amendments to the guidelines issued by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

