



Hockey Eastern Ontario (HEO), as our Provincial Sports Organization (PSO), has provided the Eastern Ontario Junior Hockey League (EOJHL) an opportunity to develop Return to Play Guidelines, with the expectation that we will mitigate risk wherever reasonably possible. Player and volunteer safety is the first consideration.

The EOJHL and HEO have an opportunity to be seen as responsible, organized and leading organizations making every reasonable effort to keep their players, staff, stakeholders and community as safe as possible. The EOJHL and HEO recognize and draw upon the public health guidance of the Ontario Ministry of Health, and the four Health Units within eastern Ontario — the City of Ottawa Health Unit, Renfrew County and District Health Unit, Eastern Ontario Health Unit and Leeds, Grenville and Lanark Health Unit.

The EOJHL has committed to the Guidelines and Procedures outlined below, as a condition of the provincial health authorities and HEO, allowing us to move forward with a first step toward a 2020-21 season, in full compliance with Ontario Regulations and the HEO Return to Hockey Framework Stage 3(b). It will be imperative that each organization comply fully with the EOJHL Return to Play Guidelines.

Failure by an organization to adhere to the Guidelines may result in sanctions by the EOJHL and/or HEO and/or the Province of Ontario, may negatively impact a fellow organization and/or the EOJHL's ability to successfully complete the 20-21 season in a safe, healthy and responsible manner.

Teams are required to review and plan how the EOJHL Return to Play Guidelines herein will be executed in consultation with their facility manager, local municipality and health authority.

The following Standard Operating Procedure has been added to the EOJHL Regulations and produced to assist each member team to follow through with commitments to public health, HEO and the province as well as other member teams. This should be used as the basis for your organization's Standard Operating Procedures for Return to Play.

You are requested to confirm on this document your affirmation that these guidelines, procedures and protocols are in place with the name of those responsible for their implementation and maintenance.

1. Facility Operations Guidelines
2. Hockey Operations Guidelines
3. Schedule of Operations

#### **FACILITY OPERATIONS GUIDELINES**

All EOJHL facilities are required to comply fully with all COVID-19 regulations and directives as outlined by provincial health authorities and the local Health Unit with jurisdiction. In addition, the

following guidelines are to be implemented by the EOJHL.

Facility Name:

Facility Address:

Seating Capacity:

#### SPECTATORS IN ATTENDANCE

Provincial and local health unit direction for the wearing of masks will be strictly adhered to. Please consult the local Health Unit's direction on masking.

Members of the public will be reminded to stay home if they are feeling unwell, even if their symptoms are mild. Members of the public with underlying health conditions may wish to participate in the League experience by viewing games remotely.

Facility operators must implement measures to ensure that members of the public attending the facility are reasonably able to maintain separation of at least two metres.

Members of the same household would not be required to physically distance from each other when attending a game in a EOJHL facility.

Occupants in the facility will be advised to physically distance themselves from members outside of their household.

Game day staff will monitor and direct spectator traffic in and out of the seating area during games and intermissions.

Game day staff are to wear non-medical masks during the game.

Spectators should remain in their designated seat for the entire game except for moving directly to a washroom, concession or exit.

Spectators in the facility to reasonably maintain necessary physical distancing when they enter the facility, during the game, and when they exit the building.

Spectators on the concourse should be moving except when at concessions, washrooms or exiting. Spectators should remain in their seats during intermissions, except for moving directly to a washroom, concession or when exiting the facility.

#### FACILITY SAFETY POLICY

Each facility must establish a plan for how to minimize physical contact and the risk of COVID-19 transmission between members of the public.

Each entry and exit point to be managed to maintain physical distancing and ensure staff are present to control access.

No-touch garbage bins to be made available.

Measures to be established to avoid groups congregating at entry for start/end times. Contactless forms of payment to be utilized as much as possible.

Patrons may be screened for symptoms and exposures and will be reminded to use online screening tools before entering an EOJHL facility.

Staff must be present at all entry and exit points to the facility, as well as within the facility, to monitor use and capacity. Separate entrance and exit points to be used.

All game-day staff and volunteers should be screened for symptoms of COVID-19 or exposures prior to allowing entry into the facility.

Staff and volunteers are to wear masks.

Signage to be placed at the entrance and throughout the facility to remind patrons, staff, volunteers, officials, etc. of physical distancing measures, hand hygiene, wearing of masks, and cough etiquette.

Hand sanitizer/hygiene stations to be made available at all entries and exits, washrooms, concessions and strategically throughout the facility.

Washrooms must have frequent cleaning and sanitization and a regime for business sanitization in place. General guidance on physical distancing and disinfection/cleaning measures after each on-ice session (practice/game) must be followed.

Teams/facility to establish measures to avoid congregation and establish process to monitor capacity and physical distancing.

Arrow decals on the floor to direct spectator movement with one-way traffic movement where feasible. Regular cleaning must occur in high touch areas (railings, door handles, elevators, counters, etc. Facilities must ensure all cleaning and sanitizing guidelines established by health authorities and the EOJHL RTP guidelines are implemented – before, during and following each event. Cashiers are to be provided with plexiglass barriers as a means of protection against possible exposure, per Health Unit direction.

## PARKING

Players and staff parking to be located as close as possible to the team building entrance. Spectator parking to follow necessary physical distancing guidelines.

## SIGNAGE AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Signage to be located throughout building outlining spectator movement and conduct where necessary. Public address announcements outlining spectator requirements will occur frequently during the game. Video Board messaging outlining spectator requirements will occur frequently during every game.

## GAME PROMOTIONS

Autograph sessions with players and team personnel will not be permitted.  
Promotional items should not be tossed into the seating area or presented to fans.  
Intermission activities to follow physical distancing and safety rules.  
Ceremonial puck drops to follow physical distancing and safety rules.  
Opening ceremony presentations to be limited for physical distancing.  
Instrumental versions of anthems to be played.  
In-stand Announcers and game crews to maintain physical distancing.

## MEDIA AND PRESS BOX

Access to the press box will be strictly enforced  
Press Box seating will be based on physical distancing guidelines  
Plexiglas cubicles may be built to accommodate physical separation

## HOCKEY OPERATIONS GUIDELINES

All team personnel (players and staff), on-ice and off-ice officials and EOJHL facility management are required to comply fully with all COVID-19 provincial, local Health Unit, and facility health and safety regulations. In addition, the following hockey operations guidelines are to be implemented by the EOJHL:

## HEALTH PRECAUTIONS

Players and staff must use League self-screening tools before reporting each day, and must stay home when ill.

Players and staff are not permitted to participate if they have any COVID-19 symptoms. Players and staff displaying any illness symptoms should consult with their physician and local Health Unit before participating.

Players and staff who have been in contact with anyone who is sick or not feeling well should consult

with their physician and local Public Health Unit before participating in League activities. Players and staff to be given information regarding best practices for social distancing. Players and staff will be required to read and understand the EOJHL RTP Guidelines before participating in games. Players and staff to practice social distancing on and off the ice as much as possible

#### PRACTICE SESSION PROTOCOLS

Teams are to continue to offer virtual instruction or training if and when possible. Players and staff should stagger entering and leaving the ice surface from the dressing room. Players and coaches will need to observe physical distancing recommendations while on the ice as much as possible.

Coaches will minimize chalk talk sessions or time at the board where athletes are required to congregate.

Coaches will minimize talking to athletes in close proximity when possible.

Coaches are to utilize station-based skill development practice plans and have players/coaches spread out to maintain physical distancing as much as possible.

Avoid drills that require players to stand in line or in groups for a long period of time. When using the full ice, coaches will utilize flow drills as much as possible that allow for maximum spacing for athletes on the ice.

Avoid the use of extended contact drills to avoid athletes being in close proximity to each other except for brief exchanges.

Coaches are recommended to utilize the Hockey Canada COVID - 19 safe drills and practice plans available on the Hockey Canada Network App.

#### GAME PROTOCOLS

It will be the responsibility of everyone involved to reduce and discourage extended contact along with the amount of time spent in close proximity to others during games.

Coaches will be required to discourage extended contact on the ice by their players as much as possible. Officials will be mandated to help reduce the amount of time players spend in close proximity by quickly blowing the whistle if the puck is not moving with several players engaged. Examples include puck battles with multiple players pinned along the boards and rebounds with multiple players battling in front of the net, etc.

As soon as an official blows the whistle, all players will be required to separate and distance themselves immediately.

Players and officials are to remain distanced as much as possible at the top, bottom or to the side of the face-off circle until the referee blows the whistle and then move in to the appropriate positions for the puck drop.

All participants are to avoid handshakes, fist bumps, hugs or physical contact.

All participants are to avoid pre and post-game huddles along with goal celebrations that involve extended physical contact.

The EOJHL will conduct meetings with all coaches, players and officials before the start of the regular season to stress the importance of the above points relating to game protocols.

#### **TEAM COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER:**

Positive and open communication will be an important part of returning safely to games this season. It is important to the EOJHL to ensure that all involved understand what controls and guidelines are in place. This information will be passed along to administrators, officials, team staff, volunteers, parents, players and EOJHL facilities in advance of the season to ensure the return to hockey is enjoyable and safe.

**The EOJHL and each member team will assign a communications officer who will be responsible to**

communicate and oversee the necessary health and safety protocols.

Responsibilities to include:

Monitoring all relevant updates from the public health authority. Monitoring all relevant updates from the member teams.

Communicating with local facilities on guidelines and updates. Ensuring teams, players and staff are following the EOJHL Return to Play guidelines to the best of their abilities.

Ensuring any COVID-19 cases are reported as required by the public health authority, Member, hockey association, league and facility.

The EOJHL Compliance Department to be in contact with the member team communications officer on a regular basis to assist in facilitating updates.

#### DRESSING ROOMS AND OTHER AREAS

Dressing rooms should be cleaned and sanitized (all surfaces and fitness equipment) before after each use. Equipment must be cleaned frequently.

Team Staff to ensure this is being done properly.

Individuals may not share equipment of any kind (sticks, apparel, water bottles, towels, etc)

In many facilities, showers are not permitted.

Individuals may not share clothing, soap, shampoo or other personal items.

Hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes to be available as players enter and leave. Disinfectant spray or wipes to be available for participants to disinfect high contact surfaces before and after use including showers.

Enhanced and frequent cleaning and disinfection of locker rooms to be conducted. Media interviews should be conducted outside the dressing room in a dedicated area with proper physical-distancing procedures.

Access to the dressing room to be strictly monitored -Only team personnel, on-ice officials, medical staff and essential facility staff should have access.

Teams will be encouraged to limit the use of dressing room area.

Signs are to be posted indicating physical distancing guidelines.

Jerseys/socks/clothing will be washed after each training/practice session.

Common use items to be removed from locker rooms.

Teams will be encouraged to identify warm up/cool down areas within their home facility for visiting teams players and staff to ensure separation as much as possible.

Home teams will be encouraged to work with their facility to ensure visiting teams are provided with extra dressing rooms and shower space where possible.

Home teams will be encouraged to work with their facility to ensure visiting teams dressing rooms have had enhanced cleaning and disinfection conducted at minimum two hours before game time. Visiting teams should arrive at the facility 1.5 hours before game time.

#### MEDICAL ROOM/TRAINERS ROOM

Physical distancing to be used to determine number of players in the medical room at one time.

Hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes to be made available as players enter and leave. Medical rooms/tables will be disinfected between player treatments.

Protective masks and gloves to be worn when physical distancing is not possible during treatments.

#### COACHES OFFICES/ROOMS

Be familiar with public health authority guidelines, and adhere to them.

Review the EOJHL Return to Play Protocol and Hockey Canada Return to Hockey Safety

## Guidelines.

Be familiar with facility guidelines /requirements specific to the prevention of COVID-19. Host an initial meeting with parents/guardians/participants to review how programming will look and allow them to ask questions (can be done virtually if required).

If there are multiple entrances to the ice surface, split the players into groups and have them space appropriately to meet physical-distancing standards at each entrance.

Encourage participants to minimize their time in or around the facility.

To discourage extended contact on the ice by their players as much as possible. Remind players/parents to follow physical-distancing guidelines when away from the facility. Members of the coaching staff must maintain physical distancing with players whenever possible. Team meetings should be held in a controlled environment with physical distancing measures in place. Masks are mandatory for the coaching staff per direction from local Health Units.

## PLAYERS

Always respect and listen to team and facility staff as they create a safe environment.

Be familiar with the EOJHL RTP Guidelines

Be familiar with facility guidelines/requirements specific to the prevention of COVID-19.

Minimize going in and out of doors, including dressing room doors.

Facility doors are considered high- risk touch-points. Use the elbow to open.

Absolutely no sharing of food or drinks.

Absolutely no spitting of any kind, including after rinsing of mouth.

Assist the coach in establishing required guidelines during hockey activities while on or off the ice.

Immediately separate on the ice anytime the whistle is blown during games.

Avoid contact with anyone who is sick.

Follow the instructions of your public health authority if you are notified that you have been in contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19.

Be leaders in the community as it relates to COVID-19 prevention.

## TRAINERS/EQUIPMENT MANAGERS

Disposable gloves must be worn when handling player/team equipment. Disposable gloves must be worn when on the bench for each on-ice session.

Masks to be worn per local Health Unit direction.

Disposable gloves must be changed when required and hands (gloved or ungloved) must be washed frequently. Good hand hygiene must be practiced at all times.

## THERAPISTS AND MEDICAL PERSONNEL

Disposable gloves should be worn for all practices and games.

Hands must be washed (gloved or ungloved) and gloves changed between each player contact. Good hand hygiene must be practiced at all times.

Cloth masks to be made available and worn at all times per local Health Unit direction.

## ON-ICE OFFICIALS

Hands to be washed prior to start of each period (officials can carry a small bottle of sanitizer with them on the ice).

Personal towels only.

To have personal hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes.

Teams to supply hand sanitizer in the penalty box and dressing room for officials to use.

Physical distancing is required in dressing rooms as much as possible.

Teams to work with facility staff to see if more rooms are available, as well marked space/stalls within the dressing rooms. If the dressing room is small, a rotation system to be considered. Only game officials should be in the dressing room – no visitors.

It is prohibited for officials to drink from water bottles belonging to skaters or goaltenders. If officials require water during a game, they will have their own water bottle at the penalty bench. Referees should verbally greet coaches as they generally do, but are not to shake hands. When reporting penalties, officials are not to speak through the hole in the glass – work from a distance. Are to maintain a two-meter distance from all coaches and off-ice officials.

Reduce the amount of time players spend in close proximity by quickly blowing the whistle if the puck is not moving with multiple players engaged.

Communicate to players to immediately separate once the whistle is blown.

Equipment should be washed (jerseys, pant shells, etc.) after each session, following manufacturer guidelines. It is important that officials ensure equipment is kept clean.

Teams to work with the facility to ensure the dressing room can be cleaned and sanitized after each use.

## OFF-ICE OFFICIALS

Penalty-box attendants to wear a mask per local Health Unit direction.

Continue to monitor public health authority guidelines specific to the wearing of masks.

Teams/Facility to supply Off-ice officials with hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes to wipe down and disinfect the score clock equipment/penalty bench prior to, during and after each game. Handles to doors going to the ice are high-touch areas and proper hygiene and cleaning is important. Physical distancing must be practiced, and it is important to work with the facility to plan the best way to incorporate into the space being used.

## PLAYER BENCHES

Teams will work with facility staff to ensure the bench area is wiped down and disinfected before and after each session.

High touch areas should be wiped down and disinfected during each intermission. For all on-ice activity including practices or games, bench capacity will be monitored to allow for social distancing as much as possible.

Examples include adding another bench, limiting staff, etc.

Players are to have a labeled water bottle and are to use only that water bottle when participating in the activity.

Disposable gloves and disinfectant to be made available on benches for players and staff if necessary.

Ensure a non-touch garbage can (removable liner) or plastic garbage bag is available on the bench. It is recommended that the same person for the entire game open/close the gates and wear gloves.

## WARM-UP OFF-ICE AND ON-ICE

Players and staff must have their own personal towel.

Players and staff must use their own water bottles (cleaned after each practice and game). Additional towels and a laundry basket must be available (towels cleaned and replaced after each use). Players are to warm-up for training/practice sessions individually as opposed to in groups. Sanitary tissues and a non-touch waste basket to be made available.

Hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes to be made available.

Cleaning of jerseys, face shields and mouth-guards must take place before and after every practice and game.

Spacing in areas where individuals congregate (e.g. line ups, spacing of players sitting on benches,

and/or dressing rooms will be monitored and modified where applicable to ensure social distancing. Team huddles of any kind, handshakes, hugs, high fives, etc to be eliminated Physical distancing between coaches, participants, spectators, on ice and off ice officials to be monitored and enforced.

#### TEAM TRAVEL – PRACTICES AND GAMES

Players and staff will be encouraged to travel separately to all practice sessions and home games when possible, using private transportation and wearing masks per local Health Unit direction. Carpooling is recommended to be kept to two people with each sitting in a different row and on opposite sides of the vehicle where possible.

Players from the same household should drive together to practice sessions and home games. The interior of the carpooling vehicle should be disinfected frequently, especially high-touch areas like door handles, interior and exterior, steering wheels, dashboard controls, seat belts, etc.

#### TEAM MEALS

Players and staff must wash hands before and after each meal.

Players to be reminded to disinfect their phones regularly.

To go meals to be provided.

Hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes to be made available.

Masks to be worn by all per local Health Unit direction.

#### PROTOCOL FOR SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19

Should a player or staff member who exhibits symptoms such as a cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose or sore throat, and has a suspected case of COVID-19, the individual must adhere to the following protocol:

Notify the Head Coach and/or a Team Medical Staff member immediately.

The individual: will be instructed to be isolated and the doctor notified; must contact the local health authority to determine if a COVID-19 test is required; will remain in isolation until a negative test result is received and/or a minimum period of 14 days;

If the test result is negative, but symptoms continue, the individual will remain isolated until such time the doctor agrees that he can return to train.

Should a player or staff member test positive for COVID-19 the individual must adhere to the following protocol:

upon notification by the health department of a positive test, the individual must notify the Head Coach or a Team Staff member immediately;

Team General Manager must notify the EOJHL Office immediately of the positive test; Any team that has been in contact with the positive case must consult with the local Health Unit for direction on next steps;

The individual must self-isolate for 14 days or should symptoms get worse notify a Team Staff member or call 911;

The Club and the EOJHL will cooperate fully with health authorities while they perform case management and contact tracing (all individuals who have been in close contact in the 48 hours prior to when the symptoms started);

The Team and EOJHL Office will follow any other additional prevention and control measures as required by the local health authority.

The Team and Facility management will ensure all areas of the facility, where the infected individual has been, are disinfected in accordance to the procedures and protocols provided by the health officials; The individual will remain in isolation for a period of 14 days or until such time he is approved for return to play by the doctor.

#### ADDITIONAL MEASURES

Players and staff will be leaders in practicing physical distancing off the ice.

The Head Coach of each member club will have the responsibility of monitoring player and staff compliance while at the facility as outlined in the EOJHL RTP Guidelines.

Any violation may result in the player or staff member being subject to team and/or league discipline. The EOJHL Commissioner will make presentations to all member teams before the start of the regular season.

Every team, staff, player and facility will be provided with the EOJHL RTP Guidelines for review before September.

Every player will be required to read and sign the EOJHL Player Disclosure Form (Appendix A). Every team will be required to read and sign the EOJHL Team Disclosure Form (Appendix B). Every facility will be required read and sign the EOJHL Facility Disclosure Form (Appendix C). Every EOJHL Coach will be required to complete a Hockey Canada COVID-19 safety course .

#### INSURANCE

Under Hockey Canada's current General Liability policy, the following is the definition for 'bodily injury': "Bodily Injury" means bodily injury, sickness, disease, mental injury, mental anguish or nervous shock sustained by a person, including death resulting from any of these at any time. As it relates to COVID-19, that would fall within the definition – more specifically, under disease.

Liability claims against Hockey Canada always need to be proven by the third party, so continuing to update and enforce risk management guidelines as new risks emerge, such as COVID-19, are imperative.

Understand that Hockey Canada and its Members are actively working on updating risk-management protocols related to Return to Hockey guidelines post-COVID-19. As with all claim scenarios, the insurance company would investigate all claims presented against any Member of Hockey Canada that falls within the 'bodily injury' definition and would confirm coverage based on the framing of the allegations. It will also be important to review new municipal rink/private rink facility contracts post-COVID-19 for all rentals; in all likelihood, they will now contain a new clause which absolves the municipality/private facility owners of any liability related to COVID-19.

New lease agreements will need to be carefully scrutinized given that organizations will potentially have little control over cleaning/sanitizing of rented premises and shouldn't be expected to take on all liability related to COVID-19 in these facilities.

Finally, it should be noted that many insurance companies are implementing Communicable Disease/COVID-19 exclusions on all policies either immediately, or upon renewal. Hockey Canada can advise that AIG, who is Hockey Canada's primary General Liability insurer, has agreed to waive this exclusion in the General Liability policy until Sept. 1, 2023.

#### NEW HEALTH REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES

The EOJHL and member teams will continue to monitor any new regulations and directives introduced by Provincial Health Authorities, local Health Units, Hockey Canada and HEO and, if applicable, will be incorporated into the EOJHL Return to Play Guidelines.

#### SUMMARY

These uncertain times have necessitated specific measures to allow us to return to the sport we love. We fundamentally believe the EOJHL RTP guidelines, if adhered to, put the EOJHL, its Member Teams and everyone involved in the best position to return to and enjoy hockey in a safe and healthy manner.

As information regarding COVID – 19 virus changes, our RTP Guidelines will remain fluid and flexible to accommodate the necessary response to advice from the Provincial Health Authorities.

Together, we can return to this amazing sport and do so in an environment that is as safeguarded as possible.

**PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT EACH SECTION THAT IS HIGHLIGHTED IN RED HAS A PERSON(S) NAMED AS RESPONSIBLE FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION AND/OR ENFORCEMENT.**

**PLEASE ENSURE THE BELOW DISCLOSURE FORMS ARE FILLED OUT AND SIGNED.**

The above Guidelines and Procedures for EOJHL Return to Play are acknowledged and will be implemented. These are to be used by each organization as their guideline for Returning To Play. The EOJHL Return to Play Guidelines have been thoroughly screened by HEO RTP Task Team, the HEO Board of Directors and Ontario Public Health Authorities.

**Affirmed By:**

**GENERAL MANAGER GOVERNOR/PRESIDENT/OWNER MEMBER TEAM NAME:**