



MPA Ice Hockey Committee Ice Hockey Recommendation for Return to Participation

Referencing Orders and Guidelines from the Following Resources

National Federation of State High School Associations
Governor's Office - State of Maine
Maine Department of Education
Maine Department of Economic & Community Development
Maine Department of Health and Human Services
Maine Principals' Association Sports Medicine Committee

The NFHS, along with the Maine Guidelines for Community Based Sports, has labeled the sport of ice hockey as a “Moderate Risk” . “Moderate Risk” activities are those that involve intermittent contact, but with protective equipment or mitigating measures in place may reduce the likelihood of respiratory particle transmission between participants. (e.g., wearing masks, modifying play to maintain 6 feet of physical distancing, cleaning and disinfecting). The following recommendations are being made in accordance with NFHS and the Maine Department of Economic & Community Development guidelines.

Coaches and School Administrator(s) must hold a team educational session prior to the first contest to educate student-athletes of all rules related to competitive competition with other school districts and the requirements outlined below. In addition, each coach, paid and volunteer, must complete the free Covid-19 course called Covid-19 for Coaches and Administrators currently available on the NFHS Learn platform at <https://nfhslearn.com/>.

- **DISTANCING**

- Space players at least 6 feet apart (e.g., during warmup, skill building activities, simulation drills, when explaining drills or the rules of the game).
- Organizers should identify staff members or volunteers to help maintain physical distancing among players, coaches, umpires/referees, and spectators.
- Require individuals to maintain 6 feet of physical distance from individuals who are not part of their household group whenever possible.

- **SPECTATORS/CAPACITY**

The approval of spectators, if allowed, must follow the guidelines below.

- Spectators are allowed at outdoor competitions. Spectators are not allowed at indoor competitions given the challenges of adhering to indoor gathering limits. Such public health-informed limits make it impossible for athletes to invite even one spectator. Video or streaming of events is recommended.
- Organizers of sports activities are responsible for limiting the number of individuals that can gather in a shared space, in accordance with the Governor's Executive Order on gathering size limits.
- Every individual in the space counts toward the gathering limit, including players, coaches, cheerleaders, officials, volunteers, and spectators.

- If a space cannot accommodate the gathering limit without complying with the 6-foot distancing requirement, occupancy in that space must be limited to allow for such compliance.
 - Face coverings must be worn by athletes' coaches, staff, officials, sideline cheerleaders, and spectators.
 - Spectators must maintain 6 feet of physical distance between themselves and other spectators as well as players.
- **FACE COVERINGS**
 - All individuals must always wear face coverings, including athletes during competition.
 - Athletes must replace their face covering if it becomes wet or otherwise soiled.
 - To facilitate the use of a face covering, coaches and officials should consider using an artificial noisemaker such as an air horn or electronic whistle in place of a whistle.
- **HAND AND RESPIRATORY HYGIENE**
 - Regularly and thoroughly wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
 - Make sure to educate all participants on the importance of washing hands or using hand sanitizer before, during, and after play, as well as during practices and all team-based activities.
 - Cheering/yelling by athletes, spectators, and coaches is strongly discouraged. Clapping and other activities that do not involve the projection of respiratory droplets are low-risk alternatives.
- **FACILITY & PLAYING AREA**
 - When possible, schools should provide separate entrance and exit for teams and spectators to separate the teams from the public.
 - Home teams shall provide hand sanitizer/sanitizing stations at the scorer's table and each team bench.
 - Adequate ventilation is required for playing areas, with facilities having flexibility in implementation such as using properly working ventilation systems or outdoor air exchange using fans in open windows or doors. Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk (e.g., risk of falling, triggering asthma symptoms) to individuals using the facility. Additional information on readying ventilation systems is available from the [U.S. CDC](https://www.cdc.gov).
 - Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces on the court/play area at least daily, or between uses as much as possible. Use of shared objects and equipment should be limited and objects should be cleaned between uses if possible. Follow recommendations provided by the equipment manufacturer when cleaning and disinfecting equipment.
- **SCREENING**
 - Student-athletes must complete a self-screening for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 prior to participation or entrance into an opposing school's facilities.
 - All game day staff/officials must complete self-screening questions prior to arriving at the event.
- **GENERAL ICE HOCKEY CONSIDERATIONS**
 - Before, during and after play, players, coaches, game officials, team personnel and game administration officials must 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 physical distancing of 6 feet or greater on the bench.
 - Everyone should have their own beverage container that is not shared.
 - Gloves are permissible for all coaches and team staff and for all game administration officials.
 - Eliminate non-essential personnel who are at ice level and near participants throughout the contest.
 - If available, dressing facilities for game officials and teams should be large enough for them to use physical-distancing protocols and should be properly cleaned and disinfected prior to arrival.
 - Disinfect equipment and uniform after use.

- **ICE HOCKEY RULES CONSIDERATIONS**

- Players' Benches
 - Maintain physical distancing as much as possible when on the bench.
- Limit bench personnel to observe physical distancing of 6 feet or greater.
- Penalty Benches
 - Limit to essential personnel and maintain physical distancing from personnel and participating players.
- Team Captains
 - Captains need to maintain physical distancing when talking or conferring with a referee.
 - Maintain physical distance during the pre-game meeting with captains and head coaches.
- Protective Equipment
 - Face coverings are required.
 - Plastic shields, unless designed specifically for ice hockey and meeting the NOCSAE standard, are not allowed.
- Student-athletes should keep their mouth guards in their mouth throughout the competition. If the mouth guard is taken out, a player must wash or sanitize their hands before continuing to play.

- **CONSIDERATIONS FOR OFFICIALS**

- It is recommended that outdoor scrimmages are self-officiated at this time.
- On-Ice Officials Uniform and Equipment
 - Electronic whistles are permissible (supplies are limited).
 - Gloves are permissible.
 - Do not share uniforms, towels, apparel, and equipment.
 - Bring your own water bottle.
- Maintain physical distancing for meetings with captains and coaches.
- Essential off-ice officials must maintain physical distancing and wipe down workspace before and after the contest.

- **SCHEDULING**

- There shall be no minimum number of games required.

- **VISITING TEAM**

- Visiting teams should arrive in a self-sufficient manner.
 - Come ready to play the contest dressed in uniform if possible.
 - Medical kit with necessary athletic training supplies.
 - This should include back up face coverings and gloves.
 - All student-athletes must bring their own water vessel clearly labeled with their name.
 - Visiting teams should plan to bring their own water jug for their student-athletes to refill their water vessels.
 - These jugs/refill station should be clearly marked with the team name and purpose of only for use by such school when possible.
- Designated space for visiting teams may be available at rinks that have protocols in place for sanitizing those areas.
- Visiting teams will be briefed by the home team medical staff on protocols and isolation space if an athlete becomes sick during play.

- **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BUSING/TRANSPORTATION**

- If transport vehicles (e.g., buses) are used, drivers should practice all safety actions and protocols as indicated for other staff (e.g., hand hygiene, face coverings). Drivers should be a minimum of six feet from passengers to the extent possible; drivers must wear a face covering; consider physical barriers for driver.
- Open bus/vehicle windows open if weather allows.
- Masks/face coverings must be worn by everyone on the bus.
- Hand sanitizer should be available and used when entering and exiting the bus.
- To the extent possible, maximize the distance between individuals on the bus. Since vehicles have difference sizes and capacities, there is no single recommendation for spacing. That said, filling a vehicle to its maximum capacity even with masks/face coverings poses a public health risk and is inadvisable.
- Assign seating, individuals from the same household should sit together if space on the bus is limited.
- Minimize the number of people on the bus at one time within reason.
- To minimize contact between passengers, load the bus from back to front and unload the bus from front to back.
- Routinely clean and disinfect buses or other transport vehicles.
- Encourage alternative modes of transportation to competitions for athletes who have other options. Advise athletes who carpool to wear face coverings while in the vehicle, maximize outdoor air circulation, and open vehicle windows if weather allows.