

Please see revisions to the following sections (in yellow):

- **3. Arrival time**
- **5. Physical Distancing and Masks**
- **6. Hockey Equipment**
- **7. Change Rooms and Den Moms**
- **8. Transit from Dressing Room to Arena**
- **9. Number of Participants In the Arena and On-ice**
- **12. Movement of Coaches Between Teams**
- **13. Spectators**

### NGHA Interim COVID-19 Protocols

The NGHA has been assessing various COVID-19 safety protocols throughout August and September to ensure compliance with OWHA, local public health and facility requirements.

We continue to fine-tune our approach as OWHA and ice provider guidance evolves. We are also striving to have consistency across our three ice providers (City of Ottawa, Sensplex and Carleton University), each of which has somewhat different protocols.

The NGHA is also operating under the main principle of minimizing the number of people in facilities and minimizing the risk of close contact amongst players and staff. Health and safety is the primary objective.

This protocol will be modified on an ongoing basis to incorporate any adjustments or improvements required.

This protocol is mandatory for all NGHA teams.

#### **1) Designated Team Official**

Each team must have a Designated Team Official who will be accountable for ensuring team compliance with the NGHA COVID-19 protocol, arena rules and regulations and public health advice.

This Designated Team Official will need additional help to handle the logistics of arrivals/departures at facilities, and will work closely with the team's Coach to implement the required protocols for suspected or confirmed COVID-19 illness.

The Designated Team Official will be designated by the Head Coach, and will usually be the team trainer. However, this person should have a back-up and will require additional volunteers, including a Team Safety Officer(s) (see below)

## 2) Team Safety Officer

Each team must also have a Team Safety Officer for each ice time. This person / persons will be responsible for completing specific duties at the facility, including:

- Managing participants at the entrance to the facility;
- Taking attendance and ensuring completion of COVID-19 health/screening assessments by all players and volunteers entering the facility using the Teamsnap Application (see below);
- Ensuring compliance with facility rules, including maximum number of individuals in the facility; and
- Liaising with facility staff.

## 3) COVID-19 Self-Assessment and Health Check At Rink

Each player and volunteer must be screened/assessed for COVID-19 symptoms before entering the facility. They will do this in two steps:

- using the Teamsnap on-line application, each player and volunteer will complete the on-line self-assessment form. The Team Safety Officer must ensure that the player has completed this on-line assessment before entering the building; and
- at the rink, the Team Safety Officer will also verbally confirm with each player/volunteer that they are feeling well and that nothing has changed since they completed the questionnaire.

Note: for **Bell Sensplex**, players and staff members must also complete the Sensplex on-line form. <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd-6TUrtncaxheQ76Cy0Sv4lx3IIOVkCwyiBWrXHPkgmGFLg/viewform>. This is in addition to completing the screening questionnaire on Teamsnap.

If a player has not completed and provided a self-assessment, they cannot enter the facility until it is done.

The Team Safety Officer will also validate attendance for that ice session, which must be retained in Teamsnap for 21 days. These records are required under local public health regulations so that Ottawa Public Health can conduct contact tracing in the event of a confirmed COVID case. The Designated Team Official must also have easily accessible contact information for each team member (players, staff and volunteers), including name, telephone number and address.

In summary, the Team Safety officer is required to:

- ✓ Review the facility requirements on the NGHHA website to be familiar with the specific procedures;
- ✓ Remind all players and staff to complete their COVID-19 Health Check in Teamsnap, and Sensplex On-line assessment if appropriate, prior to coming to the rink;
- ✓ Meet all players and staff at the entrance of the facility to confirm the on-line health check has been completed and verbally check that the player is still feeling well;

- ✓ Work with rink facility staff to direct players into the rink at the appropriate time; and
- ✓ Ensure that health check and attendance information is kept for 21 days.

Protocols to address player illness are outlined later in this document.

Facilities have restrictions on when players and volunteers can enter a facility. The City of Ottawa and the Sensplex are providing access 20 minutes prior to an ice time. Carleton University is providing access 15 minutes prior to an ice time. The Coach, Manager or Designated Team Official will advise players of the appropriate arrival time to provide sufficient time for attendance/screening to be taken prior to entering the arena.

Volunteers that enter the facility with the team are expected to remain in the cold area of the facility for the duration of the ice time. Volunteers who are not on the ice or bench during practice should remain in the cold area of the rink and as close to the bench as possible. They should not leave the facility until the entire team departs at the end of their ice time.

#### **4) TeamSnap**

The NGHHA has procured an Association licence for TeamSnap on behalf of all teams. Details have been sent to all coaches. Teams who have already purchased TeamSnap accounts will be reimbursed.

#### **5) Masks, Physical Distancing and Hand Hygiene**

All players and staff must wear masks at all time, except when on the ice / practicing. Players and coaches should wear their masks into the arena and only remove them in the dressing room and/or when they are putting on their helmets. Masks can be stored in the player's/coaches' bag (see section 6). Mask must be put back on when the helmet is removed in the dressing room at the end of practice.

Players and staff must maintain the 2 metre / six-foot rule at all times. This includes on the ice and on the bench. The NGHHA will provide additional instruction to teams on distancing requirements during scrimmages and on-ice activities, in accordance with OWHA guidelines. If team staff are tying skates for younger players, staff must wear a mask.

Players and staff must sanitize their hands upon entry and exit of the facility.

Absolutely no spitting is permitted. Parents, coaches and trainers are required to address this behavior if observed.

#### **6) Hockey Equipment**

Skaters and staff are not permitted to bring large hockey bags into the arenas, and players should dress as much as possible before entering the facility. Players are permitted to bring a small duffle bag to hold their helmet, skates, gloves, mask and other personal belongings.

Goalies can bring their goalie bags and complete dressing in the arena, but should make every effort to dress as much as possible before coming to the rink.

Players should wash equipment frequently. Jerseys should be washed after every practice.

Sharing of equipment is strictly prohibited.

Teams should sanitize/wash pucks after each practice.

## **7) Change Rooms and Den Moms**

The NGHA is permitting teams to use dressing rooms, in accordance with facility rules and regulations. However, as noted, players should dress as much as possible before entering the facility to expedite entry and departure.

It is important to note that facilities are limiting the number of players in a dressing room, and are assigning two rooms to each team to ensure physical distancing. Most arenas also have additional seating outside of dressing rooms. Teams can use these to improve social distancing.

The NGHA's strong preference is to have two den moms assigned to each dressing room. However, this may not be possible in all instances due to participant limits (see below) or other considerations. Teams are required to ensure appropriate supervision of all dressing rooms being used by having:

- a) Two Den Moms in each room; or
- b) One Den Mom in the room, and one Team Official (Trainer, Coach) outside the room with the door remaining open at all times. If the door is left open, teams must ensure a sufficient level of privacy for players in the room (i.e. no visibility from the hallway).

Only players and female team staff are permitted in the change rooms at all times. The only exception is the Fundamentals, where parents are permitted in the change room.

Den Moms are not required to be on the official team roster unless they are entering the bench area of the rink. Den Moms are required to remain in the ice pad / bench area for the duration of the practice and are counted towards the facility's participant limit (see below).

## **8) Transit From The Dressing Room To The Arena**

Players are to remain in the dressing room until the Zamboni and city staff have left the cold area. Coaches are responsible for instructing players when to exit the change room to access the ice. Players cannot mingle in the hallway between the dressing room and the ice, nor along the glass, while the ice is being maintained.

**9) Number of Participants in the Arena and On-ice**

Each ice provider (City of Ottawa, Sensplex and Carleton University) have different thresholds for number of participants. The NGHA has set out participant limits to provide some level of consistency:

Arena	# of Participants Permitted in Facility	Recommended Distribution
City of Ottawa Arenas + Bell/Richcraft Sensplex	27 Participants	17/18 Players 4/5 Staff (Coaches, trainers) 4 Den Moms
Carleton University	25 Participants *  *in accordance with Carleton University's regulations	17/18 Players 4/5 Staff Minimum 2 Den Moms

Coaches will need to assess their volunteer rosters for their teams to determine how best to fill all roles. This can include dual role positions (i.e. coach/trainer; trainer/den mom; coach/den mom).

The Team Safety Officer does not count towards the number of participants unless that individual will be entering the rink area to perform other duties (i.e. on-ice helper) once all players and staff have entered the arena.

Special provision has been made for the Fundamentals age group. Parents will be permitted to assist their daughters in finishing getting dressed (e.g. helmet, skates etc.).

**10) Water bottles**

Water bottles are permitted but must be clearly labelled. Players must bring their own water to the rink, and bottles shall not be stored in water bottle trays.

**11) Mandatory Training For All Team Staff**

All team staff that play a role in player safety are required to complete the mandatory OWHA COVID-19 on-line training. The link is on the NGHA website.

## **12) Movement of Players, Coaches and Trainers Between Teams**

Players are only permitted to practice with their team. No player call ups / affiliations are permitted. This includes goalies.

On an exceptional basis, coaches and on-ice volunteers are permitted to be rostered with more than one team with the approval of the VP Programs. Volunteers must be properly rostered with each team in accordance with regular insurance protocols. **Rostering coaches / on-ice volunteers on multiple teams should only be done on an exceptional basis when necessary for team operations.**

Trainers are permitted to support more than one team to ensure compliance with OWHA trainer requirements. Teams are encouraged, however, to roster multiple trainers from within the team parent group to ensure one can first be drawn from their own roster before reaching out to another team.

## **13) Spectators**

The NGHA is not permitting spectators at this time in order to minimize the number of individuals in the facility and the associated logistics placed on team staff. This will be re-examined later in the season. Parents/guardians should wait in their vehicles during practices and avoid congregating. Parents must be reachable by telephone at all times.

**For Fundamentals, in recognition of the higher level of need associated with younger children, one parent will be permitted to help their daughters finish getting dressed, and can remain in the facility for the duration of the practice.**

## **14) Dryland Training & Other External Training**

Dryland training is not permitted in arenas. Teams can make arrangements to undertake team-run off-ice training outside, using appropriate physical distancing, respecting group size restrictions and respecting the requirements of the facility (i.e. some do not permit congregating near the arena). If dryland training is being held on a separate day from a scheduled ice activity, the team must undertake the standard COVID screen protocol required for on-ice sessions.

Teams cannot organize/book additional ice times (e.g. last minute ice) or external development (e.g. Next Gen, Amped, Perfect Skating, FitLab) without the explicit pre-approval of the VP Operations. Funds cannot be collected by the team for this purpose and any activities not explicitly approved by the NGHA will not be considered sanctioned events for insurance purposes.

## **15) Social Gatherings**

In-person social gatherings of any kind (e.g. team ice breakers, fundraisers, coach-parent meetings) are not permitted at this time. Activities via zoom etc. are permitted, with appropriate supervision.

## **16) Personal Protective Equipment**

Team trainers are encouraged to have hand sanitizer, extra masks and gloves on hand in their supplies. The NGHHA has secured an allotment of supplies for each team. Contact [policy@ngha.ca](mailto:policy@ngha.ca) to make arrangements for pick-up.

## **17) Illnesses**

There are a number of illness-related scenarios that will need to be managed on a case-by-case basis. The main principle is “If sick, stay home”. However, there are a range of scenarios that teams may face during the season. If there are questions, teams can contact the NGHHA at [policy@ngha.ca](mailto:policy@ngha.ca).

### **a) What if a player doesn't pass the TeamSnap Health Check?**

If a player or staff completes and does not pass the Teamsnap self-assessment, they cannot attend the ice session. They should complete the Government of Ontario self-assessment tool and follow the instructions provided: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/>

### **b) What if a player arrives at the rink and is exhibiting symptoms?**

If a team official observes a player with COVID-19 symptoms, the Head Coach is authorized to prohibit the player from entering the facility and participating in an ice session. The parents/guardian should be encouraged to use the Government of Ontario on-line screening tool to determine next steps.

### **c) What should I do if a player or staff member goes for COVID-19 testing?**

The NGHHA is encouraging NGHHA families to communicate with their Coach and Designated Team Official if a player or staff member is being tested for COVID-19.

Teams are obligated to respect player privacy. However, depending on the situation (e.g. illness the day after the practice), with the family's consent, team officials may choose to advise other families on the team that a player (who will not be identified) is being tested, so that families can self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms and take appropriate steps if necessary. The family would then notify the Coach and Designated Team Official when the results are received, so that team families can be informed of the outcome (see d. for more on positive tests).

If a player is undergoing COVID-19 testing, teams should consult with the NGHHA to determine if upcoming practices should be suspended pending the results.

### **d) What if a player or staff member tests positive for COVID-19**

Ottawa Public Health (OPH) will take a lead role if a person tests positive for COVID-19. OPH will provide direction to the family, and may reach out to the NGHA to conduct contact tracing if necessary.

The NGHA is also encouraging families to be share positive test results with their Head Coach and Designated Team Official. As noted, player privacy will be fully respected. However, teams are encouraged to inform families that an individual (who will not be identified) has tested positive so that families can self-monitor and seek medical advice if appropriate.

**e) Where can I find additional information on COVID-19?**

Additional resources are available on the NGHA website – [www.gowildats.ca](http://www.gowildats.ca)