



Return to Play Information for being at the Arena and in a Game

Dear referees, liners, and officials,

In an effort to compliment to effective use of vaccines¹, the following precautions are being used to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spreading during hockey games. These precautions are highlighted as they pertain to on-ice officials and apply to game play.

Two notes:

1. this document is based on Hockey Manitoba's Return to Play document found at hockeymanitoba.ca/return-to-play/. Please refer to that document for full details.
2. Also, if a specific arena has more strict precautions than those listed here, please abide by the more strict requirements.

**This is a return of hockey.
This is not a return to normal.
Know this document; apply this document.
Know your job. Do your job.**

When at the arena, but not on the ice.

1. **If you are sick, stay home.** Tell your assignor (with as much warning as possible) that you cannot officiate.
2. All officials **18 and over are required to provide proof of double vaccination** to enter a facility. **As of December 5, 2021, all officials 17 and under are required to have proof of at least 1 dose of a vaccine or provide proof of a recent negative COVID-19 test to enter an arena.**
3. **Wear a facemask** when entering, and being at, the arena. When on the ice, players and on-ice officials are not required to wear a mask. At any time you are off the ice, wear a face mask except when eating or drinking.
4. **Maintain hand hygiene** using soap/water or hand sanitizer.
5. **Maintain physical distancing of 2+ meters** where possible.
6. **Ensure physical distancing in dressing rooms** by taking turns in the dressing room if the room is too small to physically distance, wearing most of your equipment to arrive at the rink or spending intermissions in the hallway if you feel safe doing so.
7. **Only on-ice officials are permitted in the dressing room.**

In-game Precautions/Rule Emphasis

8. Note: **these are not rule changes** but rather rule emphasis.
9. **Quick stoppages and separation.** When the puck becomes frozen along the boards or at the net with multiple players engaged, stop the play quickly. Once play is stopped, players need to separate quickly to reduce time occupying the same space. Players who do not separate quickly may be assessed an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.

¹ HWRD encourages all officials, referees, liners, timekeepers and game participants who are medically able to be vaccinated to increase the chances of enjoying a full (lock-down free) season. If you have any concerns or questions about vaccines please talk to a health care professional.

10. **Stay separate while waiting for face-off.** Players and official should stay 2+ meters apart while waiting for the face-off. Players and officials can take their positions as per the rules in the final 5 seconds of the 15 second line change (i.e. after the official conducting the face-off blows her whistle).

Other precautions to reduce contact and potential spread with others:

11. **Handshakes with coaches before the game are not used.** On-ice officials can greet coaches from 2+ meters away without physical contact.
12. **Post-game handshakes are not to be completed.** Instead, team should line up on their blue line and salute the other team by raising their sticks.
13. **Pre-game team cheers are allowed** so long as the team can maintain physical distancing.
14. On-ice officials are encouraged to **have a small bottle of hand sanitizer** on their person or at the penalty bench **to apply regularly during the game.**

Precautions related to the penalty bench:

15. On-ice officials should **communicate with the timekeeper through the open gate** rather than the hole on the penalty box.
16. If a penalty bench has gates between the timekeeper and the penalized player, **keep those gates closed as much as possible.**
17. **The timekeeper may not enter the referee dressing room.** Visit with the timekeeper or sign the game sheet in a larger space.