



ALASKA STATE HOCKEY
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UPDATED Notice of Immediate ASHA COVID POLICIES

October 19, 2020

To: Alaska Hockey Community:

Dear Alaska Hockey Family:

As you all may be aware of by this time, unfortunately, the state hockey community has recently experienced a cluster of positive tests for COVID-19. ASHA's October 17, 2020 COVID-19 Policy is being hereby updated after consultation with Dr. Anne Zink and Dr. Ohlson who were both kind enough to provide additional insight in and important information. While it is difficult, if not impossible, to ascertain the origin of exposure, in part because some hockey families refused to participate in the critical contact tracing disclosure and sharing of information, it is clear that, moving forward, if we as the Hockey Community do not take every possible measure within our control to slow or avoid the transmission of this infectious disease, we run the real risk of continued transmission and further outbreaks within the hockey community. Additionally, if we as a Hockey Community do not do better, we run the real possibility that local or state public health officials will take matters into their own hands and greatly restrict or stop our ability for continued play. While this is always a real risk, Dr. Zink, Alaska Chief Medical Officer wants all of us to know that real risks to individual hockey teams and the hockey community at large are:

- (1) the health effects of a disease that can include longer-term lung and brain problems, heart problems that may affect the ability to play sports, severe illness and even death, even in young healthy people.
- (2) the health effects of a disease that can spread easily, undetected, through generations of a family, often affecting the most vulnerable the worst.
- (3) the huge effect on a hockey season having the entire team quarantined for a few weeks, which could be a crushing disappointment if it comes around the time of a big tournament.



In a concerted effort to make the hockey experience safe and minimize risks for everyone, and to try to assure continued play, the ASHA Executive Committee has conferred and implemented a series of protocols that are hereby mandated, or recommended, for its affiliate members and associations. These protocols are hereby implemented and to be enforced immediately until further notice and regardless of, and in addition to, protocols that may be required by the local governing authorities and facilities where practices and games are held.

The latest science informs us that the greatest risk of exposure occurs while in close contact with others for more than 15 minutes at a time. A recent article regarding learned data from a transmission of COVID as a result of an adult hockey game in Florida, and the guidance from public health and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) has all aided in informing the adoption of these polices. Those tools within all of our control to reduce the likelihood of COVID spread and transmission are:

- (1) wearing masks
- (2) proper sanitization
- (3) maintaining social distancing
- (4) limiting the size of gatherings to prevent the opportunity for community spread

The tools within our control to allow the local associations and teams act proactively upon discovering a positive COVID exposure are:

- (1) each association having a COVID Mitigation Plan in place
- (2) maintain proper contact tracing
- (3) provide timely notification
- (4) follow the CDC quarantining and testing before returning to play

COVID Mitigation Plan and Reporting

All local associations must adopt a COVID Mitigation Plan and must submit that plan to Anna Culley, Chairman of the ASHA COVID Ad-Hoc Committee. The development and presentation of a COVID Mitigation Plan is not discretionary and it must be completed and presented to remain in good standing. If an association has not yet completed or presented its plan to Anna Culley, it must do so no later than October 22, 2020. Anna has previously provided the minimum guidelines as to what each Mitigation Plan must address. Some items that should be addressed in your team's/association's Mitigation Plans as recommended by the public health officials are:

- alerting each team member and coach to what COVID-19 symptoms are <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>), that COVID-19 symptoms can be very mild and feel like a mild cold or allergies, but this is a different year than any other year and anyone



with one or more symptom must stay home and get tested immediately

- if someone has one or more symptoms and chooses not to get tested, they should wait until ten days have passed since their symptoms began and their symptoms are resolved before they return to play
- players and coaches should not practice, play or be around other people when they have a pending test
- players and coaches who have been named as a close contact to a positive case must quarantine for 14 days after their last close contact with that person, regardless of any negative tests during that period of time- quarantine cannot be shortened by a negative test
- alerting each team member and coach that their decisions made outside of hockey to attend gatherings (even of family and friends) with others outside their household bubble carries risk that they will become infected with COVID-19 and result in others on their team becoming ill and/or quarantined, posing a health risk as well as a significant risk to their season.

It is also mandatory that each positive case be reported to Anna Culley no later than 24 hours after discovery to a positive COVID test result. If you have any questions regarding development or presentation of your association's Mitigation Plan, or regarding reporting and proper protocols consistent with the public health officials mandates upon discovery of a positive exposure, please contact Anna Culley immediately. She can be reached at akregistrar@live.com or (907) 322-7633.

Locker Rooms

Regarding locker rooms, until further notice, unless your association has obtained an exception by provided a locker room use policy which has approved by Anna Culley locker rooms are closed. Except for those associations with an approved Locker Room Use Plan, continued locker room use shall be prohibited at all rinks for both practices and games until further notice. Players are to come to the rink pre-dressed. Goalies can get dressed at the rink but should socially distance while wearing a mask.

Player and Coach Masks and Social Distancing

All players and coaches must wear masks and should maintain proper social distance. All players and coaches must wear masks when entering the facility and while putting on skates. All participants must wear masks until it is time to take the ice and put the



masks back on immediately upon getting off the ice and removal of helmets. Masks can be removed before putting on helmets to go on the ice. Masks must be put on immediately after the removal of helmets after the ice session and must continue to be worn leaving the facility. To the extent possible, areas where players can stretch and put on skates will be made available and designated that provides proper social distancing.

Players and coaches are not permitted to arrive any earlier than 15 minutes before the ice session. At games, players and coaches can arrive no more than 25 minutes before games to allow players to stretch for a few minutes. Once the session is over players must leave the facility immediately after taking off their skates and in no event more than 10 minutes after the session.

Water Bottles

Every player must have an individual water bottle that is clearly labeled and is not to be shared with others.

Contact Tracing/Limited Gatherings/Health Questionnaire/Temperature Checks

A member of the Team Staff must keep attendance logs to know who was at practice and maintain the logs in the event contact tracing becomes necessary. Any hockey spectators, including family, are discouraged from attending practice. At all games, the home team is responsible for designating a team representative to make sure that all spectators sign-in to the facility and answer the qualifying questions. These logs should be maintained by the facility or home team Association for contact tracing.

It is strongly recommended, but not required, that every spectator entering the facility at games and all players and coaches at practice submit to a temperature scan. Those with temperatures exceeding 100.4 degrees should be asked to leave or not participate.

Spectator Limitations/Masks

Spectators, when allowed, must wear masks and socially distance from others in attendance except immediate family members. Immediate family members mean: those family members who have been members of your hockey family's "bubble" during this pandemic. ASHA encourages that families limit spectators to one family member per player. Spectators are to enter the facilities immediately before an event and exit immediately following an event. Local association are free to place additional limitations on the size of any hockey gathering consistent with these recommendations.



ASHA has received reports of our parent/spectator groups not complying with the mandates of wearing masks, proper social distancing and limiting the size of gatherings. While we cannot ascertain if this activity has contributed to the recent reports of a cluster of Hockey COVID cases, we as a community cannot continue to publicly disregard the most basic health advice we are receiving from the public health officials and expect the rinks to remain open for our kids to be able to play. Sacrifices must be made to provide our youth and adult players the continued opportunity to enjoy playing the game of hockey during this COVID pandemic. The ASHA Executive Committee urges all of us in the Alaska Hockey Community to come together, to do better, and to do everything within our power to adhere to the most basic guidelines so that our kids and adults may have the continued privilege to play this game we all love and enjoy.

ASHA appreciates that some of these mandates and recommendations may seem “harsh” or unnecessary. Obviously, the goal is to reduce exposure and transmission to the virus to the greatest extent possible for the safety and health all of our players, coaches and spectators. Still, our success in reducing exposure and transmission will only occur if each of us is vigilant about compliance with the protocols. Member organizations and teams face the potential for sanctions if the mandates are not enforced. ASHA also recognizes that one-size does not fit all circumstances and that there may be a need for certain exceptions to these mandates. In that event, please contact Anna Culley, to seek out and have exceptions approved before unilaterally exercising exceptions.

Of course, if there is someone who is symptomatic and/or tests positive for the virus, please follow your organization’s mitigation plan and any other state or local protocols. All positive tests must be reported to Anna Culley immediately, and if you have any COVID related questions or concerns, please contact Anna Culley as she is running point on all things COVID for ASHA. Anna is in contact with public official officials, and she is extremely knowledgeable as to our mandates, and public official and CDC guidelines.

Yours in Hockey,

ASHA Executive Committee.