



MEMORANDUM

To: All Ringette Alberta Members and Participants
From: David Myers, Executive Director
Date: September 1, 2020
Re: Important Update / New Information - Return to Ringette

In this update:

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- Some Sports Excluding Coaches from Cohorts
- 2 metres vs. 3 metres
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On Friday, August 28, Alberta Health Services published updated [Guidelines for Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation](#). There are some implications for arena sports which are explained below. We have also included some clarifications for previously communicated information.

Documents on the Ringette Alberta website will be updated according as quickly as possible.

AHS Intent vs Literal Interpretation

Ringette Alberta's decisions around Return to Ringette are based on the requirement to adhere to Public Health Orders.

"Under current CMOH Orders, businesses and entities (this includes Ringette Alberta and all local Ringette Associations) are required to:

- *implement practices to minimize the risk of transmission of infection among attendees;*
- *provide procedures for rapid response if an attendee develops symptoms of illness;*
- *ensure that attendees maintain high levels of sanitation and personal hygiene;*
- *comply, to the extent possible, with the COVID-19 General Relaunch Guidance and any other applicable Alberta Health guidance found at: alberta.ca/biz-connect.aspx."*

This is the law.

To comply with the CMOH Orders, Ringette Alberta has put in place an Alberta Supplement to Ringette Canada's National Direction for Return to Ringette and, among other documents, [Consequences and](#)

Safety Measures.

In the Consequences and Safety Measures document, we use terms like “required” and “must” because, unfortunately, a percentage of individuals in our community are wrongly treating words like “recommended” and “should” as meaningless and therefore ignoring the public health order (the law) to “**comply, to the extent possible...**”.

Take Away: All Members and Participants adhere to the intent of AHS.

Some Sports Excluding Coaches from Cohorts...

The AHS guidelines state, *“No more than 50 people can be on the ice (including players’ benches, boxes) at the same time. This number includes referees and coaches who are unable to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres from participants.”*

- If coaches cannot maintain physical distancing, they must be included in the cohort.
- If coaches can maintain physical distancing, then they do not have to be included in the cohort.

When it comes to non-cohort coaches, AHS states, *“These individuals are required to wear a mask and perform proper hand hygiene if it becomes necessary to temporarily interact with cohorting participants at a distance of less than 2 metres.”*

Some sports, or unique operators within a sport (e.g., private groups) may be permitting all their coaches to attempt to maintain physical distancing at all times in all situations thereby ignoring AHS’s intent, i.e., temporary interaction and do not appear to be complying with the public health order (the law), i.e., “comply, to the extent possible...”.

Reported violations will be investigated by AHS. Violations may be reported [here](#).

Take Away: No change to Ringette Alberta Guidelines Regarding Coaches and Cohorts

2 Metres vs. 3 Metres

In a July 8, 2020 Government of Alberta presentation to Alberta’s Provincial Sport Organizations and others in the Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation (SPAR), the following statement was made, in writing:

“Physical distancing of 2m (3m for high intensity workouts) is better than cohorts”. This was reiterated by Alberta’s Chief Medical Officer of Health in a sport town hall call. To paraphrase, ‘3 metres is actually preferred’.

In our Return to Ringette Document (July 30, 2020) our definition of physical distancing reflects our objective of erring on the side of caution and that is more important to adhere to the intent of the imprecise information from the Government of Alberta than literal interpretation of every word.

So, the requirement from Ringette Alberta remains 3 metres when there is moderate to intense physical

activity, i.e., playing, practicing and training) and 2 metres at all other times.

Take Away: No Change to RAB Consequences and Safety Measures.

Use of Masks by Non-Cohort Coaches

Some team staff desiring to be a non-cohort team staff member have requested that they be permitted on the bench and in the dressing room (where available) if they wear a mask.

This is not in line with the intent of AHS which states, "... *temporarily interact with cohorting participants...*"

Team staff must choose to be either in the cohort or outside the cohort and follow the [non-cohort restrictions](#).

Take Away: No Change to Ringette Alberta Non-Cohort Team Staff Requirements

Health Zone Restriction Lifted

Participating outside one's Alberta Health Zone is now permitted.

Participant movement approval is no longer required. Participant movement approvals processed to date are now moot. Movement defers to the Residency and Release Policy.

Note: Travel outside the province to play ringette is still not permitted

Take Away: Regular player release process in effect.

Number of Sport Cohorts

Information from the Government of Alberta on cohorts remains unchanged from what was first published in June. You can read about cohorts here: <https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/covid-19-relaunch-guidance-cohorts.pdf>.

The purpose of cohorts is explained by the Government of Alberta:

- *Limiting close physical contact only to those in a cohort decreases opportunities for being exposed to the virus while giving the opportunity for social interaction between individuals within the cohort.*
- *Keeping the same people in the same small cohort group, rather than mixing and mingling, helps reduce the chance you or someone else will get COVID-19.*
 - *If someone does get sick, it is also easier to trace a person's close contacts when cohort members are known.*

As such, Ringette Alberta is permitting individuals to participate in only one ringette cohort at a time.

Ringette Alberta cannot police what individuals do away from ringette. You are asked to think of others,

not yourself.

Each individual is accountable for their decisions regarding participating in other cohorts. Individuals participating in more than one cohort increase the risk to everyone they come into contact with and, should they contract COVID-19, their entire ringette cohort will be affected.

Those who have issue with this expectation or wish to obtain more information on cohorts such as school sports academies, school sports teams, etc., are encouraged to contact Alberta Health Services. Please do not contact Ringette Alberta.

Take Away: One Ringette Cohort at a time.

Safety Officer Questions

When an individual indicates their intent to participate in an activity, but subsequently does not show up, we were instructed to inform our Safety Officers to ask the participant why (presumably to determine if the athlete is exhibiting COVID symptoms). This is not permitted.

From the AHS document, *"An individual participant is under no obligation to inform sport organizations or other participants, coaches, instructors, officials or volunteers of:*

- *the reason for missing a practice or game,*
- *if they are pursuing COVID-19 testing, or*
- *the results of a COVID-19 test."*

Take Away: Discontinue asking these questions

Come Try Ringette Sanctioning

Physical distancing for young children in a sporting environment like ringette is not feasible and participating in a one day activity is not conducive to cohorts.

Take Away: Ringette Alberta is not sanctioning Come Try Ringette events (or similar, e.g., Bring a Friend) until further notice.

Game Sanctioning Temporarily Suspended

This season, we are facing a massive challenge with the availability of officials due to cohorting. We require everyone's cooperation when it comes to game scheduling.

- All Members and participants should expect fewer games than a typical ringette season.
- No games requiring officials may be scheduled without the approval of the authorized body*.
- Unless communicated otherwise by Ringette Alberta, **games requiring officials are prohibited prior to October 15, 2020.** Ringette Alberta reserves the right to lift this prohibition early or extend it.

*BGL, Chinook, NAWRA, CORA, etc..

Take Away: Officials availability will be extremely limited. Adjust expectations and behaviours accordingly.