

Joint Statement by Hockey PEI and Ringette PEI on player safety

A number of new protocols are in place to allow PEI hockey and ringette players to return to play this season. The protocols are working well to limit contact with other people while keeping the flow of participants in and out of arenas on a very specific schedule. Recently, a safety concern was identified related to transportation.

Asking children to come to the arenas already dressed in their hockey or ringette gear has reduced the amount of time players are spending in change rooms, the number of people in the change rooms and has allowed for a much quicker transition into and out of the facility for ice times. The problem is that in doing this, there may be an added risk for those players during transportation (unsafe use of booster seats or seat belts while wearing equipment) or in the parking lot (trying to change in the cars which will become more challenging and unsafe as the weather changes).

To deal with this issue there are three sets of regulations to consider:

- Highway Safety regulations around the safe use of car seats, booster seats and seatbelts.
- CPHO COVID-19 guidance around cohort size and regulations the arenas must follow
- Safe sport regulations around ensuring that children have safe places to participate in sport.

The following is a hierarchy of best practices to follow as it relates to getting dressed for practice/games:

1. Players make their own way to the change room, change into their gear within the allocated time, remain in the change room until their ice time is ready and proceed to the ice with their team when the ice is ready. Once the ice time is complete, quickly change out of their gear and leave the facility.
 - a. This will happen with the support of their coaching staff and team management who are already part of their ice cohort.
2. Teams can recruit a few more volunteers to assist players in putting on their gear in the change room so long as they are within the ice cohort size of 50 participants. These volunteers would then become part of the ice cohort, must stay in the ice cohort section, and cannot mix with the spectator cohort.

Keys to success

- Parents can support this by having younger children practice getting their equipment on at home in the required amount of time.
- Ensuring that players are arriving at the facility within the acceptable time.
- All volunteers have the necessary safe sport checks with their local association
- Volunteers follow the rule of 2
- Arenas are able to provide adequate space for these additional volunteers to spectate the activity in the ice cohort section.

