



OWHA COVID-19 BULLETIN

December 23, 2021

With the onset of the Omicron Variant that is highly transmissible and the continuing pandemic, we draw your attention to updated information below and do advise that the situation is very fluid. It is important to follow the announcements and information coming from all levels of government and other stakeholders, especially local PHUs and others that impact hockey such as facilities. The MOST restrictive requirement of OWHA and all these organizations is in place at all times.

There are currently many OWHA Associations that have shut down games, tournaments and programming.

OWHA will continue to support programs that meet all OWHA requirements and are also in compliance with the MOST RESTRICTIVE health and safety measures from all levels of government, PHUs and other stakeholders. We remind everyone that our collective priority is the mental and physical health of all participants not the scoreboard. If a practice or game can take place in an area of this province that is open, we support our local Association to work with involved PHUs and the OWHA to permit or close programming.

We have had a number of games postponed due to Covid-19 cases and/or exposures. In addition, some teams have had to pull out of tournaments at the last minute. These decisions are important to ensure the safety and well being of participants and citizens.

Thank you to everyone who is contributing so much to provide opportunities for safe and positive experiences in hockey.

HIGHLIGHTS

We draw your attention to highlights of the Ontario release December 10th with a link to this bulletin <https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1001327/ontario-taking-action-to-protect-against-omicron-variant>

The Ontario government release on December 10, 2021 requires QR codes for proof of vaccination and also QR codes issued by PHUs for any exemptions that are deemed eligible by them. There is also a requirement that all players be vaccinated except: players under the age of 12; and players who were born in 2010 and who are 12 years and 12 weeks of age or younger.

We also draw your attention to highlights of the Ontario release December 17th with a link to this bulletin [Ontario Further Strengthening Response to Omicron | Ontario Newsroom](#)

- The Ontario government release on December 17, 2021 introduced a 50 per cent capacity limit in certain indoor public settings including:
 - Facilities used for sports and recreational fitness activities;
 - Personal physical fitness trainers;
 - Non-spectator areas of facilities used for sports and recreational fitness activities (e.g. gyms);
 - Indoor recreational amenities;
 - Indoor clubhouses at outdoor recreational amenities;
 - Meeting and event spaces.

OWHA SANCTIONED TOURNAMENTS

- We draw your attention to the Tournament section at the bottom of this bulletin
- There are both requirements and recommendations in this section
- Tournament hosts and teams entering tournaments must consider all safety, logistical and financial implications carefully and ensure players and parents are aware of implications. Teams may have to pull out of tournaments at the last minute or even during tournaments. Tournament may have to be cancelled at the last minute. We urge everyone to consider all aspects carefully.

OWHA GAMES, PRACTICES and PROGRAMS

- Many games have been cancelled due to Covid-19. OWHA will work with associations and teams for league games that have been cancelled to determine if they can be safely rescheduled or if we need to create a formula to determine league standings. We do point out that the future is unknown at this time and our priority remains health and safety with the hope of a safe return to hockey when possible.
- OWHA teams may not play against any team from outside Canada and pre-approvals are required to play any team from outside Ontario.
- Unsanctioned activities are not permitted at any time.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Many PHUS, municipalities and facilities have implemented very restrictive requirements, and these must be supported. As an example, if an OWHA team is located in a PHU that does not permit game play and limits the number of participants, a team in this area is NOT permitted to leave its PHU and play games in another PHU. Similarly, if a team is located in a PHU that permits game play, that team may NOT go to a PHU that does not permit game play.

PROVINCE OF ONTARIO ANNOUNCEMENT DECEMBER 10, 2021

On December 10, 2021, the Ontario government issued a News Release, "Ontario Taking Action to Protect Against Omicron Variant. The release contains important information and is available at <https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1001327/ontario-taking-action-to-protect-against-omicron-variant>. We draw your attention to the following;

"In line with Ontario's cautious approach throughout the pandemic and in light of evolving global evidence around the Omicron variant, the province is adjusting its COVID-19 response that will strengthen the province's proof of vaccination requirements and enhance public health measures. This includes the following measures:

- *Delaying the lifting of proof of vaccination requirements beyond January 17, 2022, aligned with the reopening plan that stipulated that doing so was contingent on the absence of concerning trends.*
- *Effective January 4, 2022, requiring the use of the enhanced vaccine certificate with QR code and the Verify Ontario app in settings where proof of vaccination is required. The QR code can be used digitally or by printing a paper copy. Individuals can download their enhanced certificate with QR code by visiting <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/book-vaccine/>.*
- *Strengthening the verification process for medical exemptions and clinical trial exemptions by requiring a certificate with a QR code. Organizations and businesses that are under the provincial proof-of-vaccination system will be advised to no longer accept physician notes as of January 10, 2022.*
- *Effective December 20, 2021, requiring proof of vaccination for youth aged 12 to 17 years participating in organized sports at recreational facilities.*
- *On the advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, Ontarians are strongly advised to limit their social gatherings and the number of gatherings they attend over the holiday season. Additional precautions should be taken if all individuals are not fully vaccinated or where vaccination status is*

unknown. Employers in all industries should make every effort to allow employees to work from home."

It is important to understand that proper documentation including QR codes and identification are required. In addition, physician notes will no longer be accepted after January 10, 2022. If an individual feels they qualify for an exemption, they must approach their PHU.

OWHA TOURNAMENT COVID REQUIREMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The OWHA and its Members are working with our stakeholders to ensure that we are able to continue to provide female hockey in a safe environment for the duration of the season. With the increase in COVID numbers over the past month in Ontario the OWHA in consultation with Public Health information and our Chief Medical Officer have established the following recommendations and requirements for Tournaments in the OWHA and for OWHA Teams entering tournaments beginning December 26, 2021. The precautions are being provided around Tournaments as these events have a high congregation of people intermixing in non-hockey activity settings, such as dinners at restaurants, hotels, carpooling, social settings of parents and players that are heightened especially in Tournaments that have Teams travelling from other locations of Ontario, adjacent provinces or countries.

All OWHA Covid-19 requirements must be in place at all times. In addition, more restrictive requirements are mandatory as imposed through the Federal Government, Ontario Government, Municipal Government, Facility/Facilities and others involved.

In addition, all requirements of all PHUs must be supported. This includes the PHU where activities are taking place (responsibility of the tournament organizers) and also the PHU of each participating team (responsibility of each team to know the requirements of their local PHU). NOTE: These materials are subject to change

REQUIREMENTS

- Properly worn masks at all times by all individuals connected and involved in the tournament with the only exception of Players while they are on the ice or bench during games or for On-ice Officials while on the ice.
- Not attend or participate if they are exhibiting any signs or symptoms of COVID 19.
- No showers allowed for use during tournament.
- No vendor stands allowed in lobby areas of the facilities during the tournament.
- Follow all OWHA and health and safety requirements with the most restrictive requirement in place

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TOURNAMENT ORGANIZERS

- Manage the facility in a manner that avoids intermixing of Teams outside of the ice surface through:
 - Stagger and divided registration of Teams when entering facilities;
 - Minimize time of Teams inside the facility pre and post-game;
 - Avoiding interaction of Teams in hallways or tunnels to the ice;
 - Avoiding interaction of Teams with pre-game dryland warm-ups; Others as deemed appropriate.
- Encourage players to come to the arena already dressed as much as possible while complying with transportation requirements such as the safe use of seatbelts,

- Banquets, lounges or event spaces where participants (players, coaches, officials, parents, tournament staff and spectators) are intermixing are not permitted,
- Crowd control that moves parents and spectators outdoors immediately following games,
- A maximum of one parent or guardian per child if a player requires support tying skates and that should take place with masks and social distancing outside the dressing room. Only screened individuals are permitted in the dressing room,
- Limit the number of spectators, fans, patrons within the facility.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARTICIPATING TEAMS, PARTICIPANTS and OTHERS

- No team meals in restaurants as a group between games,
- Minimize the time at the arena pre- and post-game,
- A maximum of one parent or guardian per child if a player requires tying skates and that should take place with masks and social distancing from others outside the dressing room. Only screened individuals are permitted in the dressing room.

OUT OF PROVINCE TEAMS FROM OTHER PARTS OF CANADA

- The PHU/PHUs where the tournament is taking place must be notified by the tournament organizers and be in approval of the team's participation
- The designated health authority where the team is travelling from must be in approval
- The team must agree to follow all protocols in place
- The team and tournament must be prepared for last minute cancellations
- Effective January 1, 2022, all teams participating in Ontario must follow Rowan's Law Removal from Play and Return to Play requirements

OUT OF COUNTRY TEAMS

- Teams from outside Canada are not permitted to play in OWHA tournaments or participate in OWHA sanctioned activities until further notice
- OWHA teams are not permitted to travel outside Canada until further notice.

NOTE: The OWHA will work with the PWHPA on activities meeting Covid-19 protocols that are in compliance with Ontario mandates.

RAPID ANTIGEN TESTING RECOMMENDATION

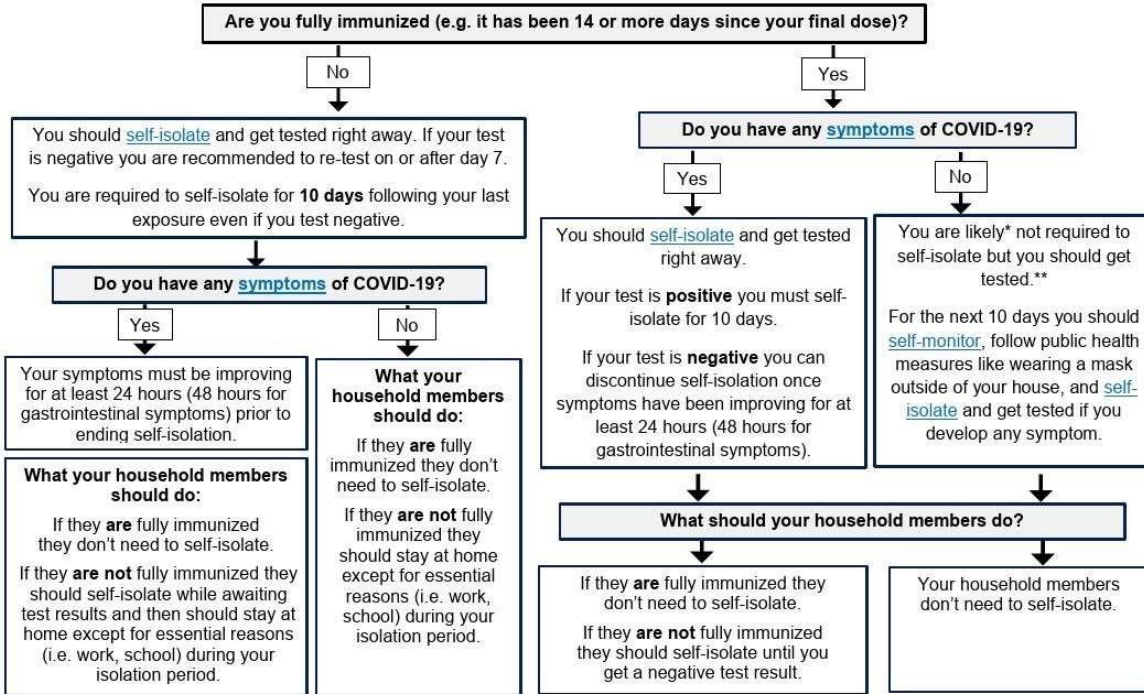
It is recommended with the blitz on provided by the Ontario Government on Rapid Antigen Testing that each Player, Team Official, On-Ice Official and Tournament Volunteer conduct at a minimum self-administered Rapid Antigen Tests each day of the tournament in order to protect their teammates, family, opponents and the volunteers participating in the tournament.

Protocols for COVID 19 Rapid Antigen Test Positive Result

If any Player, Team Official, On-Ice Official or Volunteer who tests positive on the COVID 19 Rapid Antigen Test must immediately obtain a COVID 19 PRC Test and follow Public Health requirements. This player is ineligible to participate in programming.

All immediate family and close contacts are to follow the below chart provided by the Government of Ontario **or Public Health if more restrictive.**

You've been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, now what?



Your local public health unit will contact you shortly with more instructions.

*Self-isolation still may be required at the discretion of the local public health unit. Refer to the [COVID-19 Fully Immunized and Previously Positive Individuals: Case, Contact and Outbreak Management Interim Guidance](#) for individuals with immunocompromise and residents of high risk congregate living settings / inpatients. **Refer to [Provincial Testing Guidance](#).