

RETURNING TO THE RINKS



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UNITED STATES ICE RINK ASSOCIATION

PREPARING YOUR ICE RINK TO RE-OPEN

The purpose of this document is to provide ice rink owners and operators general recommendations as they develop plans to re-open their business to the public. The recommendations following are not intended or implied to be mandates or industry standards. Many of these recommendations are based upon current guidelines set forth by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other Federal government agencies. The knowledge surrounding COVID-19 is constantly changing and circumstances are different based on geographic region. Therefore, the United States Ice Rink Association strongly encourages ice rink owners and operators to adhere to their state and local guidelines when determining their own re-opening policies and procedures.

Questions or concerns please contact the United States Ice Rink Association at (719) 538-1149 or info@usicerinks.com.

1. Review Your State and Local Government's Current Business Re-Opening Guidelines

- Follow guidelines on number of people allowed in the facility at one time and physical distancing
- Designate a staff member to monitor state and local government websites for updates or changes to guidelines

2. Adhere to Local Department of Health Guidelines Concerning Food Service

3. Personnel

- Put together a re-hiring plan if you furloughed or laid-off employees due to the pandemic
- Update your current sick time / paid time off (PTO) policies
 - Require employees showing any symptoms or signs of sickness, or who has been in contact with known positive cases to stay home
 - Implement employee symptom screening questions and workplace temperature monitoring
 - Send employees home that are showing any symptoms or signs of sickness at work
- Update Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) policies and procedures
 - Require that employees wear masks and disposable gloves at work
- Develop physical distancing policies and procedures for staff interactions
 - Limit areas that employees can congregate
 - Space work shifts and breaks to control number of employees in facility
- Develop and implement an employee re-training program for all new policies and procedures

Additional Resources:

[U.S. DOL – Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Employer Paid Leave Requirements](#)

[U.S. DOL – Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Employee Paid Leave Rights](#)

[U.S. DOL – Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Employee Paid Leave Rights - Poster](#)

[CDC – Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to COVID-19](#)

[OSHA – Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#)

[CDC – Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19](#)

[CDC – Social Distancing, Quarantine, and Isolation](#)

4. Cleaning

- Identify high traffic areas of the facility that need to be frequently disinfected
 - o Public access
 - o Employee only access
- Identify high touch equipment and fixtures that need to be frequently disinfected
- Update current cleaning standard operating procedures (SOP)
 - o Recommendations
 - » Dressing rooms cleaned and disinfected after each use
 - » Restrooms cleaned and disinfected every hour
- Update and implement employee (SOP) training plan
- Purchase appropriate cleaning equipment and EPA Registered disinfectant chemicals
- Purchase Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for your employees to use for cleaning tasks

Additional Resources:

[CDC – Cleaning And Disinfecting Your Facility](#)

[CDC – Re-Opening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting](#)

[EPA – Frequent Questions about Disinfectants and Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

[OSHA-NIOSH – Protecting Workers Who Use Cleaning Chemicals](#)

[OSHA – Protect Yourself: Cleaning Chemicals and Your Health](#)

[OSHA – Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#)

5. Operations

- Minimize interactions between employees and customers
 - o Registration and payments for programs and activities
 - » Maximize use of online options
 - » Minimize in-person transactions
 - » Install “sneeze shields” between employees and customers where possible
 - Ensure that shields do not violate fire codes
 - Lobby Front Desk
 - Point of Sale (POS) locations
 - Skate Rental counter
 - o Implement state and local government physical distancing guidelines within the facility
 - » Facility Entrance/Exit
 - Clearly identify entry and exit doors with signage
 - Use stanchions to separate

- Post physical distancing signage at entrance
- » Front Desk and POS locations
 - Mark floor for standing in line
- » Skate Rental Counter
 - Mark floor for standing in line
- » Lobby/Concourse
 - Reduce number of tables and chairs
 - Space out as needed
 - Post physical distancing signage
- » Public Restrooms
 - Close off toilet partitions, urinals and sinks as needed
- » Participant Dressing Areas (e.g. locker rooms)
 - Use multiple rooms for team activities where possible
 - Consider setting time limits for dressing room use
 - Mark available seating spaces
- » Spectator Seating Areas (e.g. bleachers)
 - Mark available seating spaces
 - Close off areas as needed
 - Post physical distancing signage
- » Participant Seating Areas (e.g. players bench)
 - Mark available seating spaces
 - Close off areas as needed
 - Post physical distancing signage
- » Off-Ice Waiting Areas (e.g. gates to get on ice)
 - Clearly identify waiting areas with signage
 - Mark floor for standing in line
- » On-Ice
 - Ensure that programming conforms to state and local government physical distancing guidelines
 - See U.S. Figure Skating and USA Hockey Programming Recommendations
- Minimize touchpoints throughout the facility
 - o Ensure that no-touch fixtures in restrooms are working properly. Consider installing these type of fixtures if not already there
 - » Examples:
 - Faucets
 - Soap Dispensers
 - Hand Dryers

- Paper Towel Dispensers
 - Toilet and Urinal Flush Valves
 - Motion Controlled Light Switches
- o Prop open doors where possible
- o Consider shutting off water fountains, vending machines, ATM and video games
- o Consider eliminating the following:
 - » Lost and Found
 - » Holding customers shoes in exchange for rental skates
- o Minimize employee’s shared equipment
 - » Examples:
 - Computers
 - POS touch screens
 - Phones
 - 2-way radios
 - Copy machines
 - Small office equipment (e.g. stapler)
- Encourage Hygiene Best Practices
 - o Recommend that customers showing any symptoms or signs of sickness, or who have been in contact with known positive cases to stay home
 - o Recommend that customers wear a mask and gloves at facility
 - o Provide hand sanitizing stations at entrance and throughout the facility
 - o Ensure restrooms have an adequate supply of hand soap and disposable towels
 - o Ensure that the following public use items are disinfected before and after each use
 - » Rental skates
 - » Rental helmets
 - » Skate aids / walkers
 - o Signage posted throughout the facility
 - » Examples:
 - Physical distancing policy
 - How to protect yourself and others
 - What to do if you are sick
 - Hand washing how-to
 - Cover coughs and sneezes
 - Don’t touch your face – eyes, nose, mouth

Additional Resources:

[CDC – COVID-19 Print Resources](#)

6. Communication

- Message to public
 - o Facility cleaning and disinfecting plan
 - » What you're doing
 - » How you're doing it
 - » Why you're doing it
 - o New facility policies
 - » Physical distancing
 - » Masks and gloves
 - » Please stay at home if you are sick
- Delivery of message
 - o Signage inside facility
 - o Website, social media and e-blasts
 - o Phone system/voicemail greetings
 - o Registration confirmation emails

U.S. FIGURE SKATING

As the nation begins to reopen businesses after weeks of stay-at-home orders due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it's important for your skating programs to have a plan as you welcome back eager customers.

First and foremost, facility management must make the health and safety of its staff, participants and the greater community its No. 1 priority.

While we all want our lives to return to "before COVID," don't expect things to be "business as usual" in the immediate future. At this time, it's especially important to have a plan that delivers on your program goals while addressing the new challenges of our daily lives.

Because each ice rink and associated business is unique, there is no "one-size-fits-all" guide. However, U.S. Figure Skating offers the following recommendations based on the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) social distancing and sanitation practices to help slow the spread of the coronavirus and ensure your participants feel safe and comfortable in your rink.

If you have questions, comments or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us. We're here to help!

U.S. Figure Skating

MemberServices@USFigureSkating.org

(719) 635-5200

Learn to Skate USA

MemberServices@LearnToSkateUSA.com

(877) 587-1400

GUIDELINES FOR RETURNING TO ON-ICE ACTIVITIES

Assess Your Situation

Skating clubs and ice rinks across the nation are unique entities that operate under various local contexts. Before welcoming back skaters, review your local government and health agency's COVID-19 response to develop and implement appropriate policies and procedures for your situation.

It is the responsibility of each skating director, coach and facility staff member to enforce policies and procedures intended to keep all participants safe. By following these guidelines as well as those of local government and health agencies, skaters and their families will be able to make informed decisions as to when they can return to the ice.

Organize

- In accordance with your city, county or state's gathering restrictions, limit the number of skaters allowed on the ice at a single time.
- Implement ways to minimize contact between participants and staff.
- Purchase adequate disinfectant cleaning materials.
- Shorten programs and stagger ice times to create a buffer between sessions.
- Establish amount of time ("15 minutes") skaters have to pack up and exit the facility.

- Online bookings and payment are recommended.
- Recommend that only one parent/guardian accompany younger children if needed.

Staff

- Conduct formal training for all staff, coaches, instructors and volunteers on new procedures and protocols.
 - Post a check list for them to follow.
- Monitor staff health. Employers may ask:
 - Are you experiencing any of the symptoms of COVID-19?
 - Have you knowingly been exposed to anyone with symptoms of COVID-19 in the past 14 days?
 - Have you taken your temperature? If yes, what is it?
 - Do not permit any staff to work with any symptoms or contact with COVID-19 in the past 14 days.
- Keep meticulous logs of users by date/time in case of need for contact tracing.
- Plan for increased levels of staff and volunteer absences.

Communicate Early and Often

- Email skaters and their families with your facility/club's new policies and procedures, making clear your expectations.
- Consider making a video to review procedures and policies.
- Coaches should provide preferred method of communicating with parents (email, text, lesson plan notes, etc.).
- Appoint a COVID-19 point person to communicate with rink management and monitor local, state and national developments.

Social Distancing

- Enforce CDC's social distancing of 6 feet apart and advising the use of simple cloth face coverings to slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others.
- Post signage reinforcing social distancing and illness prevention measures. (The CDC has free posters and handouts available on their website).
- Use tape to mark readiness areas 6 feet apart where skaters can put on/take off skates.
 - Areas may be in hallways, spectator areas, etc.
 - Leave all personal equipment in skating bag or car.
- Divide coaches and skaters into "training groups," if ice time can accommodate.
 - Number and assign each coach a designated area along the boards where they must stand to teach private lessons.
 - Coaches must remain in the area and may not skate alongside any student.
 - Limit coach/skater contact; coaches should not help students up unless the student is unable to get up. Coaches should use verbal cues when instructing students rather than physical contact.

- All warm-ups should be done outside of the building. Weather permitting.
- Locker rooms should be closed; skaters and coaches should come prepared to take the ice.
- Skaters should enter/exit ice at staggered times and separate entrances.
- Clearly label entry/exit and flow through the building.
- Lesson plans should ensure skaters are 6 feet from each other.
- Utilize markers and new activities to ensure this spacing is maintained.
- Provide 6-foot markers in spectator areas.
- Do not allow any gatherings in the lobby or bathrooms.

Provide a Clean Environment

- Follow all Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations for sanitization.
- Schedule between-session cleanings.
 - Wipe down dasher boards, door handles, and other frequently touched surfaces.
- Require skaters (or parent if a younger child) to wipe down their readiness area before/after use.
- Limit personal items on the dasher boards.
 - Spread out personal items across the bench.
 - Do not share water bottles, tissue boxes.
- Ensure adequate trash cans for tissues.

Equipment

- Disinfect all rental equipment between usage.
 - Personal items, such as shoes, should no longer be left as collateral held for rental equipment.
 - Helmet rentals should be ceased unless proper sanitation can be ensured.
- Create policies playing music and using the music equipment. Keep sanitizing wipes next to the music player and affiliated equipment.
- Use sanitizing wipes before/after using pole harnesses.

Plan Ahead

- Develop flexible refund policies should stay-at-home orders be restored or if rink is forced to close.
- Create an emergency plan with rink management for a possible outbreak.
 - Have a communication strategy to alert all who may have been exposed.
 - Identify a contact person to receive reports from skaters/families/staff of new illness.
 - Designate one person to speak publicly for the club/programs to members, media, health officials, etc.

LEARN TO SKATE USA PROGRAMS

Beginning skaters generally need more person-to-person contact with instructors, from helping them get up to retying their laces. For this reason, those involved in the Learn to Skate USA program will need to be extra vigilant in following facility and local authority guidelines. Before returning to the ice, write down your plan and clearly communicate it. Create and print a checklist of duties related to COVID-19 for staff to easily reference. Here are some guidelines to consider as you reopen Learn to Skate USA programs.

Manage Participants

- Limit group sizes to align with the physical distancing restrictions put in place by your local health officials and local facility.
 - This may affect how many people are allowed in the facility or on the ice at one time.
- Have a traffic flow plan that directs participants through the facility while limiting possibilities to congregate.
- Require participants come dressed and prepared to enter the ice after putting on skates.
- Strongly consider not offering any beginner classes (Snowplow Sam 1, Basic 1, Adult 1) until physical distancing restrictions have been eased.

Tools of the Trade

- Strive to have all rental equipment cleaned and disinfected between usage.
 - Skaters who require a helmet should bring their own. All helmet rentals should be ceased unless proper sanitation steps can be followed.
 - Personal items, such as shoes, should no longer be left as collateral held for rental equipment.
- Dispose of all plush and stuffed animal-type toys; replace with hard plastic toys that will be disinfected between uses. Consider using more on-ice drawings and toys/games that do not require direct contact by the skaters (e.g. bubbles).

Pre-Planning

- Time block and map out hypothetical situations to ensure you've adequately planned for procedures related to arrival, pre-lesson preparations, on-ice lesson, post-lesson wrap-up, and departure.
 - Avoid overlaps in audiences.
 - Allow time to disinfect lobby areas, bathrooms, tops of dasher boards and rental equipment between sessions.
- Utilize online payment/registration systems. Take payments over the phone if necessary.
- Expand registration process to include rental skate information.
 - If skaters need rental skates, have them set aside and ready upon arrival.
- If sessions are generally very crowded, consider removing free-skate/practice time at the end of classes or adjusting session times to ensure that students and instructors can maintain a 6-foot distance at all times.

Prepare for Arrival

- Stagger arrival times or use separate entrances for arrival and exit; use pop-up secondary lobby areas, if possible, to avoid congestion.
 - If limiting entrances, make sure you are following local fire department regulations.
 - If using separate entrances and pop-up lobby areas, be sure to create clear signage directing skaters to these areas.
 - If staggering classes, be sure to post the staggered class schedule in multiple areas and strictly adhere to your schedule.
- If seating is generally very close together, use tape to mark readiness zones for skaters to take skates on and off and prepare for class.
- Have instructors assigned to each level/class assist with the arrival procedures.

During Class

- Have skaters enter the ice at staggered times or separate entrances.
- Have instructors adjust lesson plans to keep skaters 6 feet away from each other.
 - Utilize markers and new activities to ensure this spacing is maintained.
- Provide 6-foot markers or indicators in the spectator areas to ensure parents/spectators stay 6 feet apart when observing class.
- Have skaters exit the ice at staggered times or use separate entrances.

After Class

- Establish the amount of time (“15 minutes”) that skaters have to pack up and exit the facility.
 - Communicate verbally and with signage.
 - Consistently enforce time limit.
 - Lobbies should not allow groups of skaters or family members to linger.

Plan Ahead

- Develop flexible refund policies should stay-at-home orders be restored or if your rink is forced to close.
- Create an emergency plan for a possible outbreak with rink management.
 - Have a communication strategy to alert all who may have been exposed.
 - Designate one person to speak publicly for the club/programs (to members, media, health officials, etc.).

USA HOCKEY

USA HOCKEY PROGRAMMING CONSIDERATIONS

As we together work our way through the COVID-19 pandemic, USA Hockey will continue to provide updates to our associations and Affiliates. These considerations focus on initially returning to the rink for practices/tryouts only. A phased approach to hockey programming would initially focus on practices (which limits the number of people in the rink). **Local rinks and programs need to follow the guidelines set forth by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as well state and local government officials in determining when, and how, it is appropriate to return to the rinks, including requirements or guidelines for physical distancing, size of gatherings or number of people permitted in a facility, or wearing of masks, etc. The information in this document is not intended or implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. The knowledge and circumstances around COVID-19 are changing constantly and, as such, USA Hockey makes no representation and assumes no responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of this information.**

As you plan for a return to the ice, below are some ideas to consider to assist with developing a return to training programs in context of COVID-19. Please know these are not requirements or recommendations from USA Hockey, but rather ideas to consider when evaluating your programming. As conditions and requirements vary throughout regions across the country, our best advice – as mentioned above – is to follow state and local government guidelines and recommendations from the CDC. Until COVID-19 is either eradicated, a vaccine is developed, or a cure is found, there is no way of completely eliminating the risk of infection.

We're thankful to all involved on the frontlines in helping us through this pandemic. Remember that we can contribute to helping eliminate COVID-19 by doing these three things:

1. Physical Distance
2. Wash Hands
3. Clean Surfaces

Please contact USA Hockey Program Services at (719) 538-1119 or program.services@usahockey.org with any questions or concerns.

REMOTE ATHLETE ENGAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Before we fully return to rinks, we encourage you to use this time as an opportunity to stay connected with players from your team last season. If local coaches and leaders engage with kids/families, there will be a better chance of them returning to hockey in the near future.

Platforms like Zoom or BlueJeans provide an effective tool to meet with your entire team remotely. Below are some valuable USA Hockey resources to utilize with your athletes.

- [USA Hockey Dryland Training Plans](#)
- [Dryland Stickhandling](#)

General Considerations

- Work with your rink to notify participants, prior to any in-person programming, about the cleaning process being implemented at the rink and additionally by coaches and administrators.
- Host an online meeting with the families to run through plans and allow them to ask questions as it relates to:
 - What they can expect.
 - Planning for the first session.
 - Precautions being taken to keep the rink clean and safe.
- Share what your facility's protocol for pacing/limiting the amount of patrons entering at one time.
- Communicate and follow the guidelines for the amount of people that are allowed to be in the building and on the ice.
- Participants with risk factors or illnesses should not attend in-person training and ice sessions.
- Participants with symptoms or signs of illness are strictly advised not to enter the premises and to seek medical assistance.
- A coach should be prepared to require that a player exhibiting signs or symptoms of illness will need to leave practice (this applies in the same way as a suspected concussion).
- Programs or coaches can send a short one-page flyer based off CDC medical recommendations about expectations, self-monitoring for symptoms of illness, the players should stay home if they have any symptoms and that coaches will remove players if they exhibit any symptoms.
- The initial focus should be on practice and skills sessions.
- Players need to bring and label their own water bottles, no sharing of water.
- Player's towels are for personal use only.
- Encourage or require patrons to register and pay online prior to arriving.
- Look at making your payment/refund policies more flexible so that families do not feel as pressured to make an ice session.
- Promote a more flexible policy around supporting, and not punishing, a player if they decide not attend training sessions.
- Players can come dressed in full equipment.
 - Work with your rink to have a common area with marked physical distanced seating common area to put on skates or remove skate guards.
 - Limit locker room use as much as possible.
 - » When local health protocol allows use of locker rooms, work to have players appropriately physically distanced (using multiple locker rooms could help).
 - » For age groups where parents need to assist players with equipment, limit the number of parents in the locker room at any one time.
- If there are multiple entrances to the ice surface, split the kids up into groups and have them space appropriately to meet physical distancing standards at each entrance.
 - Work with your rink to open up multiple entrances to the ice surface.
- Promote strict hand hygiene (hand washing and sanitizer dispensers) before and after training.

- Players need to be prepared to disinfect fitness equipment immediately after use.
- With all of these ideas, make sure you lay out and communicate a set plan for both families/players and coaches.

Parents/Spectators

- Families should be asked to minimize the number of parents/spectators that come with the player in order to limit the number of people in the facility. Work with your rink partner to determine what is best for your facility.
- Communicate with families to make sure they're aware of the facility's spectator rules around physical distancing.

On-Ice Practices

- Notify and reinforce the message that players and coaches need to observe physical distancing recommendations while on the ice.
- Avoid utilizing benches or depending on local government regulations, work with your facility to determine appropriate protocol.
- Avoid drills that require players to stand in line.
- When designing practice, utilize station based practices and have players/coaches spread out to maintain needed physical distancing.
- Minimize chalk talk sessions where players could congregate.
- Utilize non-contact drills.
- Coaches need to be cognizant to avoid talking within close proximity of players' faces.
- When leaving the ice, coaches could excuse players one-by-one giving appropriate time for each player to get off the ice. Coaches need to plan to leave an appropriate amount of time at the end of their ice session to complete the dismissal process.

After Practice

- Encourage participants to minimize their time in or around the facility.
- Have them put on their shoes or skate guards so that they can leave quickly in the same marked common space.
- Remind players and parents are to follow physical distancing guidelines when leaving the facility.
- Players should disinfect helmets, sticks and skates after each training session.
- Wash cloths (jerseys, pant shells, socks and gloves) with high temperature after each training session.

Important Programming Changes to Consider

- Limit exposure by staying focused on practices.
- Limit traveling to rinks outside of your home facility, especially to areas where COVID-19 cases are still prevalent.
- For now, eliminate handshakes and hugs after goal celebrations; instead consider fist bumping.
- Create an emergency plan for a possible outbreak.

- o Have a communication strategy to alert all who may have been exposed.
- o Communicate with your rink partner on their “deep-clean” sanitation strategy.
- o Designate one person to speak publicly for the association (to members, media, health officials, etc.).
- Most importantly, work with your rink partner to make this a safe but also a fun environment for the participants, **while still abiding by SafeSport guidelines**. These are stressful times and we want to make sure that hockey is a positive place for both physical and mental health.

DISCLAIMER

*The following considerations are provided for general informational purposes only and are not intended as, and should not be relied upon as, specific medical or legal advice. You are strongly encouraged to consult with qualified medical personal/public health officials for medical considerations and to local, state and federal orders and or laws for legal considerations. If you use any considerations provided for herein, **you do so at your own risk and you specifically release from any and all liability** United States Ice Rink Association, U.S. Figure Skating, USA Hockey, and their directors, officers, employees, volunteers, and agents in connection with your use of the enclosed considerations.*

ABOUT US

The United States Ice Rink Association is a non-profit national membership association for individuals, facilities and vendors in the ice rink and arena industry. The organization was formed in 2000 through a joint venture between U.S. Figure Skating and USA Hockey with the intent of servicing the needs of ice-skating facilities and their employees in the United States.

U.S. Figure Skating is the national governing body for the sport of figure skating in the United States as recognized by the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee and the International Skating Union. U.S. Figure Skating is comprised of more than 765 member clubs, collegiate clubs, school-affiliated clubs and more than 1,000 registered Learn to Skate USA programs representing more than 203,000 members. U.S. Figure Skating is charged with the development of the sport on all levels within the United States including athletes, officials, sanctioning of events and exhibitions, and establishing the rules and guidelines by which the sport is governed.

Learn To Skate USA, powered by Toyota, is the only skating program in the world endorsed by U.S. Figure Skating, USA Hockey and US Speedskating, with support from Special Olympics, the Professional Skaters Association and the U.S. Ice Rink Association. Learn to Skate USA's mission is to instill a lifelong love of skating with a positive and fun experience. Classes are taught through an updated curriculum by certified, passionate instructors who build solid skill progression to grow self-esteem in both kids and adults while providing them the resources to reach their hopes and dreams.

USA Hockey, Inc. is recognized as the National Governing Body for the sport of ice hockey in the United States. Our mission is to promote a safe and fun learning experience supporting the growth of the sport and all its participants and enthusiasts by encouraging, educating, developing, and administering all aspects of the sport.