



HEO Vaccine Policy FAQ

Q – Do the Government of Ontario’s vaccine passport regulations apply to spectators?

A – YES - All spectators of any HEO Sanctioned Activity aged 12 and over, including the parents or guardians of players, should be prepared to provide proof of vaccination to facility staff to obtain entry to the facility.

Q – Is it the responsibility of each team to verify someone’s vaccination status before entering a facility?

A – NO - The facility is responsible for the verification of vaccination status in order to enter. However, teams and associations are required to verify vaccination status for all team and association registered participants.

Q – Does the HEO Vaccination Policy apply to children 12 years of age or older?

A – YES - The HEO Vaccination Policy will continue to apply to all affected persons, including those aged 12 years of age or older. All eligible individuals are required to be fully vaccinated.

Q - What protocols can I expect at the rink and what may I need to do differently?

A – Each municipal facility and privately run facility is unique, so you can expect different protocols at each location. All protocols mandated by Public Health Guidelines, including the need to physically distance and the requirement to wear a mask, will be followed. Please confirm your facility’s requirements before arrival.

Q – Is it still a requirement to screen all participants for COVID-19 if all must be fully vaccinated?

A – YES – Screening is still part of the Province of Ontario’s current legislation; therefore, screening and the keeping of a participant log for contact tracing purposes are still required.

Q - What happens if someone on my team has been in contact with a positive COVID-19 case/ high-risk contact?

A - They should contact the local Public Health Unit for direction.



Q - If the government has exempted youth recreation sports, why is HEO mandating vaccination?

A - Two factors were considered prior to reaching this decision. In August, HEO became aware that the province was intending to announce a mandatory vaccination policy. Although they announced this policy on September 1, the specifics related to youth sport were not provided until September 14. HEO did not want to develop a policy that could potentially conflict with any provincial regulations and therefore held off any announcements until the specifics of the provincial regulations were fully understood. Although the province did not mandate vaccinations for youth sport participants and volunteers, it applies to spectators. Any attempt to enforce this would, in our view, create additional confusion and overhead for both hockey administrators and facility managers. As several HEO organizations had already announced vaccination mandates, we determined that a Branch-wide approach was most prudent. The second factor has been an ongoing concern with the COVID-19 delta variant and increasing case counts during the fourth wave of the pandemic. The greatest protection against continued growth in cases is to be fully vaccinated. Ultimately, player and volunteer safety drove our decision.

Q - Why is the effective date not sooner?

A - We are aware that this represents a change in approach and most families registered with their local minor hockey association prior to our vaccine mandate. We want to provide adequate time for unvaccinated participants to schedule their two vaccinations and be able to comply with the policy.

Q - Who will have access to player and volunteer medical records?

A - Player and volunteer medical records related to vaccinations will not be kept by HEO or local MHAs. Proof of vaccination (Province of Ontario vaccination receipt or Province of Ontario Verification application when available) will be shown to appropriate local MHA representatives on a one-time basis to indicate compliance. Only a record of compliance will be kept, not specific medical records. HEO reserves the right to perform spot checks.

Q - If I do not want to or cannot comply, can I get a full refund?

A - Refunds are managed by your local MHA. Please check with them to determine what options are available.

Q – What accommodations are available?

A – Any possible exemption for medical reasons in accordance with provincial and regional health authority guidelines and requirements must be substantiated by a registered/licensed medical practitioner's attestation as outlined in our policy.



Q - How do I apply for a COVID-19 vaccine exemption?

A – HEO's Accommodation Request form can be found here:

[Vaccination Medical Exemption Form](#)

[Vaccination Medical Authorization Form](#)

Q – Other HEO Districts and Leagues have implemented their own mandatory vaccination timelines. Will the HEO Vaccination Policy supersede or override what has been established at other levels of hockey within the Branch?

A – No. Associations, Districts and Leagues may devise and implement policies that is more stringent with shorter COVID-19 vaccination timeline requirements than HEO's Vaccination Policy.