

ONTARIO HOCKEY FEDERATION

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OHF Bulletin

To: OHF Member Partners, Minor Hockey Associations, Female Hockey Associations, and Junior Hockey Leagues and Teams

From: Phillip McKee, Executive Director

Date: 7/21/2020

Re: CALL TO ACTION - Insurance Liability within Ontario

COVID-19 has created an insurance liability concern for many players, staff, parents and volunteers within our game that in many cases is preventing a return to play in Ontario. The hockey community needs the help of the provincial government to eliminate the increased liability issue to ensure that organizations can make the decision to return to the ice and provide a venue for physical activity within the government guidelines without fear of reprisal.

Currently, there is no legislation that protects sports organizations, including hockey, in Ontario from legal liability related to COVID-19 for providing programming in accordance with the Ontario Government Emergency Order and their Public Health Units.

The government of British Columbia was confronted with this issue when they opened sport slightly ahead of us in Ontario and they took action to get British Columbians back to playing sports through an Emergency Order that protects amateur sport organizations, their employees and volunteers from liability. A Made-in-Ontario solution that defines the responsibilities of individuals and organizations in keeping hockey safe is what is needed. Such guidance would enable amateur hockey organizations and the courts with clarity on what constitutes acceptable practices when it comes to protecting those involved with our sport during these unprecedented times.

Despite prior efforts, the OHF has not received a response from the Government of Ontario on how they will fix this current liability issue. For this reason, the OHF and its Members will be lobbying the Ontario Government for action prior to the parliamentary break commencing on July 23. We ask that you immediately send the attached letter to your local MPP to share your concerns about personal liability risks with the current regulations for returning to amateur sport. Please be sure to include a paragraph on how the lack of legislation outlining your protection when operating sport within the Ontario Government's Emergency Order personally creates liability for you above and beyond the Hockey Canada Insurance program.

The Government of Ontario needs to take action to address this issue immediately so that plans can be made to get back to playing sports safely.