



OWHA DRESSING ROOM POLICY Frequently Asked Questions Guide

Moving Forward

The new OWHA Dressing Room Policy applies to OWHA teams and programs under the age of 18 at both recreational and competitive programming. The policy is in place and is another step towards creating welcoming and inclusive spaces for all players, while enhancing the safety of hockey participants through proper supervision and minimum clothing expectations.

Policy Rationale

Why is OWHA and Hockey Canada updating its Dressing Room Policy?

- The Dressing Room Policy is focused on enhancing inclusion and safety for all participants on any team or officiating team across the province. Dressing rooms are designated team spaces for all team participants to use and interact in on a welcoming, equitable, inclusive, and safe basis. In addition, to minimize occurrences of maltreatment, bullying, and harassment in the dressing room these spaces now come with minimum attire and supervision requirements, and a requirement to accommodate individuals if they require additional measures or supports.

Rule of Two & Enhancing Dressing Room Supervision

What is the Rule of Two?

- The Rule of Two means that all interactions with athletes need to be conducted in open, observable, and justifiable environments, which applies to dressing rooms. More information on the Rule of Two is available in the Hockey Canada Screening Policy.

What are open, observable, and justifiable environments?

- Sport environments that are open, observable, and justifiable refer to those that occur that are normal to a sport environment (i.e. arena, workout facilities, dressing rooms, bench, ice surface) that allow individuals to view the environment and do not typically occur behind closed doors. The idea is that all interactions with athletes occur in a location that someone could interrupt if necessary.

How does the Rule of Two work within a dressing room environment?

- The Rule of Two is designed for all communication and interaction to be conducted in an open, observable, and justifiable environment. The dressing room, by its design, is not always open or observable, but the environment is justifiable in the sport context. To abide by the principles of the Rule of Two, interaction with participants can occur within the dressing room if two screened team officials, volunteers and/or parents/guardians are present with the dressing room. This rule is based on the policy on Dressing Room Supervision.

What is a screened individual?

- Screened individuals have passed a thorough background check, which can include items like criminal record checks, interviews, and reference checks.

Why should the Rule of Two be implemented?

- The Rule of Two is designed to provide greater protection to both athletes and team staff/coaches by never leaving two individuals where there is a power imbalance present alone.

Doesn't the Rule of Two require more work of our coaches, team officials and volunteers?

- This Rule of Two will potentially require an additional individual to be present in situations where they were previously not present. Although there is an increase in the number of individuals, it is imperative to have this second person to increase the safety of the environment, especially in situations where individuals may be vulnerable and environments where sensitivity is needed. In hockey – this means the dressing room.
- In situations where teams may be using multiple dressing rooms, dressing room supervision and the Rule of Two still applies. Teams should endeavor to have coverage for all dressing room spaces.

I am concerned that the Rule of Two is difficult to learn and implement, is there any education available on this subject?

- Yes, the Coaching Association of Canada (CAC) has developed a bilingual e-learning module that is free and takes approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. The link for the training module is [here](#).

Base Layer

What does minimum attire/base layer mean?

- Minimum attire covers from the upper thigh to the shoulder area. The minimum attire rule ensures that there is no nudity in the dressing room. A base layer is intended to cover an individual's pelvic region and torso. The baseline level of attire in the common area of dressing rooms should be like the minimum standard of what would be acceptable in a public area of the arena.

What are examples of base layers?

- Shorts, compression shorts, a t-shirt or sports bra.

Do you need to wear wet equipment or base layer home?

- Everyone may get changed out of their equipment after practices and/or games. There is no requirement that equipment must be changed at home. Athletes may change out of their wet base layer into new clothes or clothes that they wore to the rink. The Dressing Room Policy requires that if needing to get fully undressed, to do so in a private area, like a washroom stall.

Can you still shower at the rink?

- Yes. Participants who wish to shower at the rink are still allowed. The policy includes a recommendation for a base layer when using open concept showers.

Dressing Room Management**What if an athlete shows up to the rink not wearing their base layer?**

- Team officials should instruct the athlete to use the washroom or a private changing area to put their base layer on before joining the team to put on their remaining hockey equipment.

What happens when an athlete that does not use a base layer under their equipment?

- Team officials should instruct the athlete to put their equipment (including pelvic-area protective gear) in the private washroom stall within their dressing room (if one is available) before putting their remaining equipment on with the rest of the team.

What are examples of what could be an appropriate alternative dressing room?

- In the most ideal scenario – a changing area that is near the ice surface as the team dressing room, with a washroom and shower is the best option. However, this may not always be available, so other options may include an officials' room, meeting room or staff room.
- If your program requires an alternative dressing room, team officials or local hockey associations should be proactive in contacting facilities they will play in to discuss what options are available and how to gain access to those spaces, should the need to use them arise.

Setting up an equitable schedule with a multi-gendered team with athletes who prefer to shower at the arena after practices and games.

- Please refer to the OWHA Dressing Room Policy Implementation Guide for examples of equitable dressing room schedules.

How to best support an athlete who requires an alternative dressing room arrangement, so they are welcomed and included.

- Speak with the athlete and/or their parents/guardians (if the athlete wants their parents/ guardians involved) and ask how to best include them. Listen to them and respect their needs, even if you do not fully understand them. All requests for accommodation are to remain confidential.
- Teams and associations should attempt to be proactive in finding solutions or alternative dressing room arrangements before a request for accommodation is made, to simplify and expediate the process.
- Conduct periodic check-ins to see how the accommodation is working for them and if any adjustments need to be made.
- Ensure that no pre- or post-game meetings in the dressing room occur without the athlete.
- Ask the athlete and/or their parents/guardians (if the athlete wants their parents/guardians involved) if they require support for alternative dressing room arrangements when playing in away facilities. However, it is preferable to have information available about away facilities to share in advance of travel, if possible.
- There may be situations in which teams will need to develop tailored solutions with the participant using an athlete/participant-focused, ethical, and values-based approach to guide them to a common sense and inclusive resolution.

Policy violation

Will there be guidelines around a standard disciplinary process for those who violate the policy?

- The OWHA Member is required to support the coaches in the implementation process and to ensure that the coaches have a process for accommodations in their Team Policies that complies with the confidentiality requirements. As an Association, if a coach is deliberately disobeying the direction, they have a responsibility to address the code of conduct of the coach on a complaint-by-complaint basis. As the policy is aligned with the Ontario Human Rights Code, the expectation is that Associations make best efforts to follow the policy in place. The policy is

intended to create a safe and healthy environment for the Association and its registered participants.

Is the expectation that our OWHA Member policy be updated to reflect the new OWHA policy?

- The OWHA Dressing Room Policy and related policies must be followed by OWHA Members. There is no need for an OWHA Association to further develop their own policy but rather refer to the policy in place.

OWHA U22 and Senior Levels.

Does the Dressing Room Policy apply to all Members of the OWHA?

- The Dressing Room Policy applies to all OWHA U22 and younger teams and all teams and programs that have one (1) or more registered participant under the age of 18 and the policy is also recommended for all OWHA teams.

CONTACT INFORMATION:
ONTARIO WOMEN'S HOCKEY ASSOCIATION (OWHA)
225 Watline Avenue
Mississauga, Ontario, L4Z 1P3
Phone: 905-282-9980
info@owha.on.ca