

PMHA Off-Ice Officials Manual

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INTRODUCTION

Thank you for volunteering as an off-ice official—your commitment helps create a positive hockey environment! Without you, we could not have hockey games.

Off-ice officials support the on-ice officiating team to ensure games run smoothly. As many off-ice officials are volunteers with limited rule knowledge, effective collaboration with on-ice officials is important. This handbook outlines the responsibilities of off-ice officials at the minor hockey level to help you understand your role.

ROLE OF THE OFF-ICE OFFICIALS

Every hockey game relies on the collaboration of numerous individuals. Players, coaches, and referees and linespersons are the most visible participants at a minor hockey event, but equally essential are the off-ice officials, who play a critical role in ensuring the smooth operation of each game. The responsibilities of off-ice officials include scorekeeping, operating the time clock, and monitoring penalty situations—functions without which the game could not proceed.

Off-ice officials act as an extension of the on-ice officiating team, assisting in the overall management of the game. While their authority is limited, their duties are fundamental to the successful execution of every game.

When working in coordination with their on-ice counterparts, off-ice officials form an integral part of the overall officiating team.

A key aspect of the off-ice official's role involves serving as a liaison between the officiating crew and both teams before and after the game. Their responsibilities encompass securing game rosters prior to commencement, ensuring the scoresheet's accurate completion and distribution post-game, and delivering the appropriate documentation to league officials. Much of this is accomplished through the on-line game form at PMHA now.

In fulfilling these tasks, off-ice officials support the impartiality of the officiating process and help prevent conflicts or perceptions of bias. On-ice officials remain available to offer guidance or clarification when necessary.

Impartiality is paramount for off-ice officials, as it contributes to a fair and positive playing environment. Maintaining objectivity can pose challenges, especially when personal relationships are involved; however, upholding this standard is essential. Should any off-ice official find it difficult to remain neutral, a reassessment of their involvement may be warranted. **Consistency in impartial conduct is expected equally from both on-ice and off-ice officials.**

Remember that you should not display any behaviour (yelling, excessive cheering for your team, inappropriate conversations with visiting team players in the penalty box) as an off ice official that

you would not like to see as a spectator at a game where your child is playing.

Another vital function of off-ice officials includes overseeing conduct in and around the penalty and scorer's benches. Penalised players may occasionally display unsportsmanlike behaviour or use inappropriate language, while spectators may attempt to provoke those in the penalty box. Such incidents might not be observed by on-ice officials.

It is important that Off Ice officials do not engage with spectators or players in the box who are displaying inappropriate behaviour. Off-ice personnel should focus on their job and flag concerns to your team manager if possible. If the inappropriate behaviour by a spectator or player is too bad to allow to continue, off-ice officials should report the issue to the referee at the next stoppage of play; enabling referees to take appropriate action. Appropriate action could include issuing further penalties or stopping the game until the issue is dealt with.

It is usually best not to try and take action on your own as an Off Ice Official, report the behaviour and leave dealing with the issue to the referee.

Diligence and attentiveness are required of off-ice officials throughout the game. This includes managing the operation of the game clock, recording goals, assists, and penalties as reported by the referee promptly and accurately, and efficiently handling penalty expiration circumstances. Any uncertainty must be addressed with on-ice officials immediately to maintain fairness and

minimise disruptions. These tasks demand continuous focus to ensure a positive experience for all participants.

Though infrequent, there are occasions when on-ice officials must relieve an off-ice official of their duties—typically if emotional involvement compromises their effectiveness. In such cases, the on-ice officials will courteously request the individual to step down, after which a replacement should be appointed by the responsible team representative. Play cannot resume until this transition has been completed.

COMMUNICATING WITH ON-ICE OFFICIALS

Effective communication between off-ice and on-ice officials is essential for coordinated officiating. A lack of clear communication before, during, or after a game may contribute to confusion and affect the overall functioning of the officiating team. Consistent communication can help create a constructive hockey environment for all involved.

Below are guidelines to assist off-ice officials in communicating effectively with their on-ice counterparts:

- Address any questions or concerns with the on-ice officials before the game begins. This may relate to duties or last-minute rule clarifications. Such discussions can take place during the on-ice warm-up or, if required, by approaching the on-ice officials in their dressing room prior to the game.

- When visiting the on-ice officials in their dressing room, knock on the door, identify yourself, and wait for an invitation to enter. Clearly state your questions or concerns and minimize unrelated conversation to allow the officials to prepare for the game. Courtesy from both parties supports a professional working relationship.
- During the game, use the horn only to signal the end of a period or the game itself. For other communication needs, attract the official's attention and ask them for a discussion. If you are unable to flag the referee/s, you may use the horn during a stoppage of play to signal that you need to consult.
- In most situations, off ice officials cannot stop play outside of normal stoppages.
- If procedures or explanations are unclear, seek clarification from on-ice officials. Common sources of confusion include multiple penalties, delayed penalties, and penalty termination due to goals. When in doubt, ask the on-ice officials promptly.
- Share information about incidents only when requested, and report any misconduct observed in the penalty bench area at the next stoppage, providing specific details. Avoid expressing disagreement with an official's decision. If there is concern about rule application, such as penalty termination, discreetly ask the official to confirm the ruling. Direct challenges may hinder effective communication. **In all cases, the Referee has the final say on any interpretation or action.**
- Maintain professionalism and courtesy throughout interactions, and respect the decisions of the on-ice officials. Mutual professionalism supports positive working conditions and fosters productive teamwork.

Off-Ice Officials at PMHA Minor Hockey Games

Most amateur hockey games utilise an off-ice officiating crew comprising a minimum of two individuals: the timekeeper, and scorekeeper. Occasionally an announcer and/or person responsible for music (DJ) is also included in the box. The duties and areas of responsibility for each are described below.

Game Timekeeper

The game timekeeper is tasked with managing the official game clock. In most PMHA games, this role also involves tracking penalty times via the main clock. Primary responsibilities include:

- Before the game, verify that the game clock and penalty clocks are functioning properly. For those operating a clock for the first time, it is important to become familiar with its operation prior to teams taking the ice to prevent unnecessary delays. Feel free to practice as much as you want during warmups. Better to know how to put penalties up and take them down prior to game start.
- Set the appropriate warm-up time on the clock before teams enter the ice, activating it as soon as the teams appear. At the end of the warm-up phase, sound the horn and set the correct time for the first period.
- Start the clock at the face-off and stop it each time play is halted by a whistle. Prior to the centre-ice face-off

at the start of each period, referees will confirm the timekeeper's readiness, typically signalled with a nod, an upheld arm, or thumbs up.

- In some leagues, "running time" may be used; in such cases, the clock runs continuously and penalty times are modified to accommodate. The referee will inform you of the relevant times.
- If the clock is not started or stopped appropriately, correct the error immediately when identified (ie: start or stop the clock as required). Keep a mental estimate of lost or gained time and communicate this with on-ice officials at the next stoppage of play so proper adjustments can be made promptly to minimize disruption.
- Penalties resulting in a team playing shorthanded must be entered onto the penalty clocks immediately upon assessment, **excluding coincident and misconduct penalties**. The timekeeper should be well-versed in rules regarding coincident, misconduct, delayed, and terminating penalties. Relevant scenarios are detailed later in this manual.
- When a goal leads to the end of a penalty shown on the clock, remove the penalty time before resuming play. If multiple penalties are showing on the board for the team scored against, or the Referee has signaled another penalty prior to the goal, consult with the Referee on which penalty is to end because of the goal.
- Sound the horn at the conclusion of each period only; avoid using it during gameplay or routine stoppages to gain officials' attention unless you cannot signal the referee in any other manner.
- Essential equipment includes a stopwatch, whistle, pencil, note paper, and instructions for clock operation. If the game clock is malfunctioning, timing may

need to be maintained by stopwatch, with the whistle used to indicate period end if the horn fails.

Official Scorer

The official scorer is responsible for accurately completing and submitting the game scoresheet to the league, with copies provided to each team. Ensure an official scoresheet is ready before the game, and fill in key information like game and curfew times at the top. At PMHA, we use the Electronic Game Sheet for this purpose.

SEE HERE FOR LINK TO INSTRUCTIONS FOR ELECTRONIC GAME SHEET

During the Game

- Record goals, assists, penalties, and related details on the scoresheet as reported by on-ice officials. State the period, time (elapsed or remaining), player numbers, and penalty types. Penalties should include start times, durations, and when players return to the ice, especially if released after a power-play goal.
- Special situations—such as multiple penalties during one stoppage, misconducts, and delayed penalties—should be recorded according to league rules. Work closely with penalty bench attendants to ensure correct timing and player releases.
- Penalty shots are noted both in the penalty and goals sections if successful. For delayed or coincidental

penalties, note when each penalty starts and ends, following proper procedures.

- Have with you, and use, note paper and pencil for penalty times, goals and other critical information so that you do not delay the game restarting while trying to input information into the electronic game sheet and so that you will not forget the information once the Referee has returned to the game.

After the Game

Check the scoresheet for accuracy and completeness, adding any final stats or notes (e.g., undressed players or special awards). Sign the scoresheet, have unused portions crossed out by on-ice officials, then obtain their signatures. Distribute copies to teams and make sure the original is sent to league administrators. Penalty bench attendants may also help track shots and saves by team.

PENALTY TIMEKEEPER

This position is not normally filled for minor hockey games at PMHA but is included here for reference.

- If there is no Penalty Timekeeper, the Official Scorer assumes these duties.
- The penalty timekeeper fulfills two essential roles: assisting both the official scorer and the game timekeeper. These responsibilities become increasingly complex at higher levels of hockey, where more penalties are assessed and intricate penalty situations occur. Additionally, the penalty timekeeper may act on behalf of the official scorer by collaborating closely with penalty

bench attendants to ensure that players serve the correct duration of penalty time. Detailed duties of the penalty timekeeper are outlined below.

- The penalty timekeeper documents all penalties and monitors ongoing penalty situations, typically utilizing a separate penalty summary worksheet as illustrated. The penalty timekeeper then works in conjunction with the official scorer to ensure that the information is accurately and neatly transferred to the official scoresheet.
- Furthermore, the penalty timekeeper assists the game timekeeper in displaying accurate penalty times on the game clock. Only penalties impacting the on-ice strength of either team should be shown on the clock. A comprehensive understanding of various penalty scenarios—such as coincident penalties, misconduct penalties, termination of penalties, and delayed penalties—is required, along with their appropriate interpretations. Certain scenarios are described in the official scorer section, while others can be found in Appendix III.
- Collaboration with penalty bench attendants is vital to confirm that penalized players serve the appropriate times and are released correctly. The penalty timekeeper should consult the referee regarding any questions about penalty situations either when penalties are assessed or during subsequent stoppages in play. Additionally, the penalty timekeeper is expected to assist the referee in resolving discrepancies or disputes concerning penalty expiration or termination.

PUBLIC ADDRESS ANNOUNCER/DJ

The Public Address Announcer acts as the primary verbal communication link between game officials and spectators, disseminating relevant information pertaining to the game via the public address system. While responsibilities are primarily limited to verbal announcements, the announcer's role is often the most visible among off-ice officials. Close collaboration with the official scorer is necessary to obtain accurate information. Key considerations for serving as an announcer are detailed below.

The announcer is tasked with announcing goals, assists, penalties, and other pertinent game details, generally during stoppages in play to minimize distractions. A proficient announcer typically coordinates with team representatives prior to the game to review potentially challenging names or clarify enunciation, thereby reducing confusion and errors during announcements.

When reporting goals and assists, only those individuals officially credited by the referee should be announced. Essential information includes the timing of the goal, the scorer's number and name, and—if applicable—the numbers and names of assisting players. If a goal is unassisted, the announcer will specify this accordingly.

For penalty announcements, the announcer must include the time, team, penalized player's number and name, type of penalty (minor, major, misconduct), and infraction, strictly reflecting referee-provided information.

Very few minor hockey games use an Announcer and more often the duties of this position are related to playing music (the DJ).

Important considerations for the DJ position:

- Make sure your playlist is appropriate for all ages and groups that may be at the arena. There is zero tolerance for racist, misogynist, profane, homophobic, etc. language/lyrics at any minor hockey game.
- Make sure the volume level is acceptable to the On Ice Officials. Referees and Linespersons must manage players during the time between whistles and cannot do so effectively if they cannot hear or speak over the music.
- Any On Ice Official can direct the DJ to reduce the volume or cease playing a potentially offensive song at any time. Failure to follow the direction of the On Ice Officials in this case will result in the DJ being asked to leave the box and no further music will be played at that game.
- DJs should not play any music at all when a penalty has been called on the ice until after the Referee has reported the specifics of the penalty to the Official Scorer. Communication between the Referee and the Scorer is difficult enough when trying to speak through that little hole in the glass without having loud music played at the same time.
- The DJ must be located in the Timekeeper Box and reachable by the On Ice Officials at all times. No remote music may be played.

Remember, the important thing is the hockey game, not the music.

APPENDIX I – SOME BASIC RULES OF HOCKEY

PENALTIES

A penalty is imposed on any player or team official who violates one of the rules. Penalties are classified into five main categories:

Minor or Bench Minor Penalty — The player committing the infraction will be removed from the ice for two minutes, during which no substitute can be permitted. A bench minor penalty applies to the team rather than an individual and someone from that team will serve the penalty.

Major Penalties — These involve more serious infractions with injury potential. The offending player serves five minutes in the penalty bench and the team plays shorthanded. Major Penalties are NOT washed out by the non-offending team scoring a goal. The full five minutes has to be served with every Major Penalty.

With every Major Penalty, the Referee will also assess a Game Misconduct in minor hockey. The penalized player will leave the game and a substitute will sit on the penalty bench for the term of the Major Penalty.

Misconduct Penalties — The player is removed from play for ten minutes, though a substitute may take their place on the ice. Game Misconduct penalties entail removal from the game and may include additional suspension. Gross Misconduct Penalties also include removal from the game.

Match Penalties — Assessed for deliberate or attempted injury to another player. The player is removed from the game and may face further suspensions. The team must play shorthanded for five minutes.

Penalty Shot — Awarded when an infraction denies a reasonable scoring opportunity. A non-offending team member takes a one-on-one shot against the goalkeeper from center ice; after the attempt, play resumes following a face-off.

If a goalkeeper receives a penalty (excluding those requiring ejection), another player who was on the ice at the time serves the penalty. The goalkeeper remains on the ice.

Awarded Goal- when the offending team's goalie has been removed from the ice and an infraction that normally would entail a penalty shot is incurred.

A full summary of the rules can be found on the Hockey Canada Website:

<https://cdn.hockeycanada.ca/hockey-canada/Hockey-Programs/Officiating/Downloads/2024-26-hc-rulebook-e.pdf>

APPENDIX II- OFFICIALS

Each game may have two, three, or four officials. In the Two-Official system, both referees call all infractions. In the Three-Official system, one referee calls penalties and goals, while two linesmen handle face-offs, off-sides, icing, and assist as needed. The Four-Official system combines these responsibilities.

Officials Signals

From the Hockey Canada Playing Rules 2024-2026

<https://cdn.hockeycanada.ca/hockey-canada/Hockey-Programs/Officiating/Downloads/2024-26-hc-rulebook-e.pdf>

Boarding	Striking the clenched fist of one hand into the open palm of the opposite hand in front of the chest.	
Body Checking	Open palm of the nonwhistle hand, with fingers together, comes across body on to the opposite	

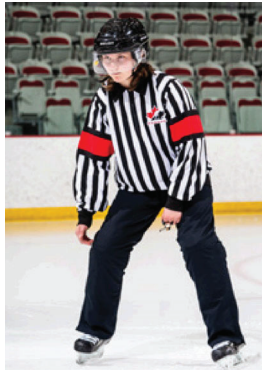
	shoulder.	
Butt Ending	A cross motion of the forearms, one moving under the other arm.	
Charging	Rotating clenched fists around one another in front of the chest.	
Checking from Behind	A forward motion of both arms, with the palms of the hands open and facing away from the body, fully extended from the chest at shoulder level.	
Cross Checking	A forward and backward motion of the arms with both fists clenched, extending from the chest	

	for a distance of about one foot.	
Delayed Penalty	Extending the non-whistle arm fully above the head.	
Delayed Off Side or Icing	Non-whistle arm fully extended above the head. To nullify a delayed off-side or icing the Linesperson shall drop the arm to the side.	
Goal Scored	A single point directed at the goal in which the puck legally entered.	

Hand Pass	Pushing motion with the open palm.	
Head Contact	Patting flat (open palm) of the non-whistle hand on this side of the head.	
High Sticking	Holding both fists clenched, one immediately above the other at the height of the forehead.	
Holding	Clasping either wrist with the other hand in front of the chest.	

Holding the Stick	Two stage signal involving the holding signal (shown above) followed by a signal indicating you are holding onto a stick with two hands in a normal manner.	
Hooking	A tugging motion with both arms as if pulling something from in front toward the stomach.	
Interference	Crossing arms stationary in front of the chest.	

Kneeing	Slapping either knee with the palm of the hand, while keeping both skates on the ice.	 A hockey referee in a black and white striped jersey with red accents on the sleeves, wearing a black helmet, is kneeling on the ice. The background shows rows of empty red and green stadium seats.
Match Penalty	Patting flat of the hand on the top of the head.	 A hockey referee in a black and white striped jersey with red accents on the sleeves, wearing a black helmet, is patting the top of his head with his right hand. The background shows rows of empty red and green stadium seats.
Misconduct	Both hands on hips.	 A hockey referee in a black and white striped jersey with red accents on the sleeves, wearing a black helmet, has both hands on his hips. The background shows rows of empty red and green stadium seats.
Roughing	Fist clenched and arm extended out to the front or side of the body.	 A hockey referee in a black and white striped jersey with red accents on the sleeves, wearing a black helmet, has his right arm extended forward with a clenched fist. The background shows rows of empty red and green stadium seats.

Slashing	A chopping motion with the edge of one hand across the opposite forearm.	
Spearing	Jabbing motion with both hands thrust out immediately in front of the body and then hands dropped to the side of the body.	
Too Many Players	Indication with six fingers (one hand open) in front of the chest.	
Tripping/Clipping/Slew Foot	Striking leg with either hand below the knee, keeping both skates on the ice.	

Unsportsmanlike Conduct or Diving	Using both hands to form a "T" in front of the chest.	
Wash Out	A sweeping sideways motion of both arms across the front of the body at shoulder level with palms down.	

APPENDIX III – PENALTY SITUATIONS

The following pages outline common penalty situations in three categories: coincident penalties, penalty termination, and delayed penalties.

COINCIDENTAL PENALTIES

Coincidental penalties happen when players from both teams receive equal penalties during the same stoppage. Substitutes immediately replace penalized players on the ice, and these penalties are not shown on the game clock. Players stay in the penalty box until the next stoppage

after their penalties expire. If they were to return during the play they would cause the teams on the ice to be in a position of having too many players on the ice and may be penalized for this.

Players can receive coincidental minor penalties or coincidental major penalties.

If you are unsure of how to deal with these penalties, discuss the situation with the Referee.

PENALTY TERMINATION

If a team is shorthanded due to a minor or bench minor penalty and concedes a goal, the minor or bench minor penalty with the least time remaining ends.

A delayed penalty being called on the ice prior to the goal MUST be part of the consideration of which penalty is to end. Most often, a player already in the box will have less time remaining on their penalty than the delayed penalty on the ice and so the player in the box will return to the game.

Major penalties are never terminated when a goal is scored.

If multiple minor penalties expire simultaneously, the captain chooses which one ends.

To determine if a penalty should end after a goal, officials must confirm: 1) the team was shorthanded; and 2) at least one non-coincident minor or bench minor penalty

was being served. If both are true, the first such penalty terminates.

DELAYED PENALTIES

Delayed penalties arise when a team already serving two separate penalties receives another.

A team must always have at least three skaters and a goalkeeper on the ice.

If a third or fourth penalty is assessed, each additional penalty begins only after the previous ones expire.

The first penalised player cannot return until play stops or until enough penalties have ended to allow another skater.

Generally, the first player penalised is the first to return.