

MEDICINE HAT CURLING CLUB and COVID-19 FAQ

July 25, 2020*

***please note:** this FAQ was drafted on July 25, 2020 and is subject to change.

Guiding Philosophy:

“The MHCC (Medicine Hat Curling Club) is committed to the positive well-being of all members of the MHCC community. The MHCC will be aligning its COVID-19 Response Plan with updated AHS (Alberta Health Services Guidelines and recommendations from our sport partner associations, Curling Canada and Curling Alberta. We agree with our sport partner associations that “it is entirely possible for people to continue to curl in a manner that is physically distant and low-risk, while still enjoying the positive social and physical benefits of the sport.”

Will there be any rule changes for the sport of curling because of COVID-19 safety concerns?

Yes, following Curling Canada’s recommendations, the “Single-Sweeper Rule” will be obeyed during all games at the MHCC during the 2020-2021 season:

- The “Single-Sweeper Rule” means that:
 - 1) Only one sweeper maximum is permitted at all times
 - 2) No “relaying” (no sweeper taking over for another sweeper at any time)
 - 3) No sweeping an opponent’s stone after it passes the T-Line
 - 4) No one aside from the dedicated sweeper for a shot can sweep any stone (including ticks and bumps and raises)

Will there be any other changes to the on-ice experience this season?

Yes, following Curling Canada’s recommendations, there will be a number of changes to the on-ice curling experience. Some of these on-ice changes will include:

- No handshakes (consider a “raise of the broom” instead)
- No touching other curler’s stones with your hand (use your broom or foot instead)
- No “bare-hand” cleaning of the bottom of your stone (use your glove or broom instead)
- No group congregating on the backboards
- A third will be designated to coin-flip, post scores and do all measurements. Only one person will take care of all these duties. Rock handles, scoring numbers and measuring devices will be sanitized before every game. Apps can also be used for coin-flip and scoring.
- ***Standing locations:*** all players should obey physical distancing recommendations during play, which means:
 - If you need to stand on the side of the ice then you should only stand on the west side of your sheet of ice, e.g., if you are on sheet #3 then please only stand on the sheet #2 side of the ice. Markings will be placed onto the ice for player positioning.
 - Only the “delivering team” is permitted access to the house during their turn (the opposing skip should stand in the hack area and await their turn to reclaim access to the house)

There will likely be other changes to your on-ice experience as well (e.g. the manner of entering the ice area, loaner equipment availability). These changes will be determined and announced prior to the opening of the curling season.

Is the MHCC permitted to use all 8 sheets of ice at the same time during the 2020-21 curling season?

Yes, according to Phase 2 of the AHS Guidelines, a facility like the MHCC is permitted to use all 8 sheets of ice at the same time to normal capacity because curling is considered a non-contact activity that can be enjoyed while maintaining physical distance.

Will playing at the MHCC mean that I belong to a "MHCC cohort"?

No. Although AHS recommend that one be mindful of the scope of their associations, since curling is a non-contact activity that can be enjoyed while maintaining physical distancing it need not be considered as a part of a circumscribed cohort. This is unlike a contact sport such as basketball or volleyball that requires close contact as a necessary feature of its activity. This means that one can curl at other curling facilities as well (just as one can shop at multiple Safeway's and Costco's), provided that those curling facilities likewise maintain physical distancing guidelines (e.g., the Single-Sweeper Rule"). It may be helpful to recognize here that the "Single-Sweeper Rule" is what enables the sport of curling to maintain physical distancing requirements, and thus allows curling to be a low-risk activity that can be enjoyed under public health restrictions.

What if members of my team are from the same household? Can we use two sweepers?

No. Whether one is from the same household or not, the "Single-Sweeper Rule" will be maintained for all MHCC leagues.

Will all MHCC Leagues be playing during the 2020-21 season?

Yes, all leagues will be operating at normal capacity during the 2020-21 season. At this time we are planning to operate all leagues as normal. Some leagues may implement restrictions and these will be passed onto membership if anything arises.

Will the MHCC Junior Program be operating at normal capacity?

The opening of the MHCC Junior Program is planning to proceed with the Junior Program as previously held in the past years. It is felt that with guidelines and safety issues being our main concern that the program should be able to move forward. Further information will be provided as it becomes available.

What is the MHCC's protocol should a COVID case emerge at the MHCC?

The MHCC has developed a COVID response plan that includes compiling an Incident Report Form for any known or reported cases. Following AHS Guidelines, any COVID related incidents at the MHCC will be reported immediately to AHS for next-step guidance, including guidance on reporting to our curlers and our cleaning protocols.

Will Waivers and Declarations of Compliance be required?

Yes. Users of the MHCC facility will be expected to complete Waivers and Declarations of Compliance. The Declaration of Compliance will declare that one will not knowingly enter the MHCC facility if they are experiencing any COVID related symptoms. Curling Canada has issued Waivers and Forms for member clubs to pass onto their memberships. Further information will be forthcoming.

Will masks be required?

The MHCC's policy regarding the use of masks remains to be determined. At this point in time we are leaning toward recommending the use of masks on the warm side of the glass (e.g. entering the building, in main lobby area awaiting their draw time and heading out into the ice area). Further details to follow.

Will lockers and locker rooms be open?

Yes. The rental of lockers will be available. We are very fortunate to have a large locker area. There will be a limit of occupancy to the locker rooms at one time and proper sanitization protocols will be in place. We would ask that common sense would prevail when accessing lockers. It is encouraged that participants arrive in their curling gear and lockers will be used for brooms and shoes.

Will loaner equipment (e.g. brooms, sliders, stabilizers) still be available?

The availability of loaner equipment at the MHCC still remains to be determined. If loaner equipment is made available then proper sanitizing protocols will be in place to ensure a low-risk, responsible use. The MHCC encourages participants to purchase their own curling equipment and to put their names on their equipment. If anyone is looking for advice on what kind of equipment to purchase Vicki would be happy to help them find a "best-fit" for their needs and interests. Please visit our well-stocked Pro Shop.

Will Sammy's Little India (Café) be open?? If so, under what conditions?

Yes, Sammy's will be open for service during similar operating hours as in recent seasons. Sammy is looking forward to seeing everyone! Sammy's operations will be aligned with AHS Guidelines for "Restaurants, Cafes, Pubs and Bars".

Will the MHCC Lounge be open? If so, under what conditions?

Yes, the MHCC Lounge will be open for service during similar operating hours as in recent seasons. The conditions will be aligned with AHS Guidelines for "Restaurants, Cafes, Pubs and Bars". It is likely that the table arrangements and seating will be re-arranged, but our priority will be to ensure a low-risk setting so that our curlers can still enjoy some of the important "social virtues" of curling.

What about the pool table, shuffleboard and dart board etc.?

High touch-point games in the Lounge such as the above will not be available at this time. If restrictions change these will be available with sanitizing protocols in place.

Will water dispensers be available?

No. Not at this time. Curlers will be strongly encouraged to bring their own water bottle with water in it to the MHCC. Please label your bottle. You can always purchase bottled water from Sammy's or the lounge.

Will there still be 50/50 draws?

Yes. Fundraising opportunities such as 50/50 draws will remain in effect. The prepay system used in the past couple of seasons gives everyone the chance to participate with little or no contact.

Will non-curling guests / spectators be permitted at the MHCC? What about just in the Lounge?

Yes, at this time we are hoping to have non-curling patrons permitted at the MHCC. In alignment with AHS Guidelines and proper distancing measures in place we should be able to allow for spectators on the warm side of the glass. Both on main level and in lounge area.

What about MHCC Events?

The MHCC still hopes to be able to run events and Bonspiels. There may be some modifications and further details will be provided as they become available.

Will sanitizer and sanitizing wipes be made available at the MHCC?

Yes, sanitizer and sanitizing wipes will be made available throughout the MHCC facility, including entrance / exit and higher-touch point areas. Frequent cleaning / sanitizing will take place throughout the facility. Rocks, Scoreboards and numbers, measuring devices and Flip Coins will be sanitized before each draw.

Will there be proper signage and directional traffic within the facility?

Yes, there will be proper signage and directional traffic within the facility. If you know Vicki you know that she likes signs and that she likes things to be clean, orderly and properly organized. You can trust that your experience at the MHCC will be structured accordingly.

Will league fee refunds be issued if AHS revert back toward Phase 1 or if the MHCC is required to shut down for public health reasons?

Yes, a modified pro-rated league fee refund will be offered if AHS requires curling clubs like the MHCC to shut down during our scheduled 2020-21 season. If there is an interruption to the season every reasonable effort will be made to ensure that games can be re-scheduled during the 2020-2021 season's timeframe. A refund policy will be put in place by the Board of Directors.

Does COVID-19 suck?

Yes. COVID-19 really sucks. But, fortunately, curling is a low-risk social activity that can be enjoyed while maintaining physical distancing guidelines. The MHCC is committed to ensuring a positive, low-risk social activity and environment that will enable our community to benefit from the mental and physical virtues that make curling great!