



MHA Official Consistency Standards

Hockey Saskatchewan understands that volunteers play a crucial role in the success of a Minor Hockey Association (MHA). Within officiating, referees and linespersons are essential to delivering a safe, fair and positive experience for participants. In some communities, experienced volunteers help guide the program, while in others, individuals step into these roles with limited familiarity with the Hockey Saskatchewan Officiating Development Program (ODP). Regardless of experience level, we aim to provide clear guidelines to help volunteers understand the expectations associated with local roles such as Referee-in-Chief (RIC), Director of Officiating and Assignor.

This document outlines the minimum standards for your officiating program, while also identifying optional best practices to help your association become a provincial leader through gold-standard initiatives.

Minimum Standard Officiating Community

- 1. Naming a local Referee-In-Chief that is part of the MHA – potential to be shared within the zone and multiple associations.**
 - This person will work closely in evaluating and providing support and communication with officials. They will also provide support to the league RIC and regional grassroots task team coordinator when it comes to league finals and provincial assignments based on their local rankings. Also, they will help to mediate issues with officials in their community.
- 2. Communicate with officials and all other members of your MHA.**
 - This may include posting the posters and material supplied by Hockey Saskatchewan or sharing and confirming that circulated memos and communications are shared within your community.
- 3. Centralized Assignor of officials (not team specific).**
 - In smaller MHAs, this may be the same person listed above. They will do their best to assign officials equally based on age, ability, policies and availability based on feedback from official coaches and the local RIC and MHA.
- 4. Official coaches to provide development and coaching.**
 - These people may go on the ice or watch from the stands to provide feedback to all minor hockey officials in their MHA during the season. After submitting reports and with approval from the grassroots regional coordinators, the official coaches can be paid by Hockey Saskatchewan monthly for their efforts in coaching.
- 5. Apply for Level 1 clinics, share information and provide transportation to have all local officials get to the required in-person clinics for registration and certification.**
 - Not all communities can host a clinic, as they are to work with neighbouring communities to select dates that work for all involved to provide an opportunity for all officials to get certified.

PROVINCIAL LEADER IN SPORT EXCELLENCE



6. Monitor the attendance and completion of officials as they work through pre-clinic registration, payment and online/in-person programming.

- There is a Google Docs sheet that is published and sent to all MHAs and is updated regularly as officials complete their certification requirements each season. Keeping an eye on that will help ease the process for those officials and not have any officials get caught with incomplete certification at the Dec. 31st deadline.

7. Community-specific plan for official recruitment and retention.

- Despite registering a record number of officials last season, continued local support and sustained efforts are essential to encourage more individuals to try officiating and remain involved.
- This may include subsidizing registration fees, providing shared equipment or jerseys, recognizing officials locally, and participating in #ThanksStripes Weekend. Most importantly, it requires strategic assigning and strong support to help officials enjoy and grow in the role.

8. Promotion to officials about the Sask First High-Performance Program and Saskatchewan Officiating Development Model leagues and camps.

- As officials continue to develop, there are always opportunities to gain more experience and receive more coaching through new opportunities. Understanding the promotion and development of officials who have positive experiences contributes to retention of officials. With new opportunities, they are likely more excited to continue while also serving the local community and saving teams and MHAs on mileage fees.

9. Be an advocate for your officials.

- Help promote your officials based on the ranking into higher tiered leagues, provincial assignments and surrounding assignors with communication with Officiating Development Committee Members.

Gold Standard Officiating Community

1. Be present in the local area.

- Be a support option for local tournaments when rules and discipline decision need to be made.
- Create a safe environment for all participants including your officials.
- Support timekeepers in their roles as off-ice officials and explain the expectations required.

2. Create a committee/network to help coach, support, rank and develop officials within your community.

- Meet regularly throughout the season to help identify the progress of officials and future opportunities as well as concerns and areas of emphasis in your organizations.
- Rank your local officials 3 times annually to identify that officials are working at the appropriate levels.

3. Encourage interested locals to be an active task team member, assignor, official coach, administrator with the Hockey Saskatchewan ODP.

- 4. Create a retention and recruitment plan for the RIC position.**
- 5. Encourage parents and coaches to attend officials' clinics.**
 - The more people familiar with the official's role, the more support and understanding they will have throughout the season.
- 6. On-ice clinic instruction provided.**
 - Provide additional training or power skating for officials. Players practice frequently, and it also helps with official development.
- 7. Fitness promotion for officials.**
 - As we know for players, as they continue with their development, the focus on fitness becomes more important. The same can be said for officials. Even promoting them to use the free Hockey Saskatchewan Official Fitness app in the off-season and helping them prepare for the annual fitness testing can be a big help.
- 8. Each official is provided with coaching and feedback at a minimum of 3 times per season. And new officials are not out on the ice without experienced partners or coaches to help get them started.**
- 9. Coordinate a coaches' meeting with your local MHA to answer any officiating questions and present any new rules or points of emphasis prior to the start of the regular season.**
- 10. Organize official meetings/gatherings on a regular basis to share development strategies.**
 - This will help with confidence, communication, comradery, retention and recruitment. This may include pizza nights, attending a higher-level game as a group, and team building. Some activity to ensure the officials feel appreciated and part of the larger group.
- 11. Officiating communication strategy with leagues and regional task team members to ensure that officials, who deserve opportunities, are on the radar and considered.**
 - Monthly communication with regional task team members can help ensure officials receive appropriate opportunities to stay engaged, while avoiding overexposure to any one team or community whenever possible.