

On behalf of the City of Nanaimo Arena Department

Dear Players, Parents, Coaches, Staff and Volunteers,

The situation with reopening recreation facilities and services and returning to sport is a very fluid process as we continue to adapt, adjust and learn as a result of the ongoing changes to health and safety requirements due to the COVID19 pandemic. The City has taken a thoughtful, careful and cautious approach to reopening facilities and this will remain the approach as we move into the fall hockey season. The City of Nanaimo has developed a comprehensive COVID safety plan to ensure the health and safety of everyone that uses the facility is maintained and to prevent the transmission of COVID19.

The City of Nanaimo has received and reviewed the feedback and concerns from the community about the safety protocols that are in place in the arenas. The safety protocols that have been created are designed to meet the physical distancing requirements and mass gathering order (50 people in the facility) set out by the province. These two requirements pose many complex challenges for recreation and sports facilities as the reopening process unfolds, some of the challenges and complexities include; controlling access in and out of the facility, facility size and design, financial impacts, cleaning and disinfecting procedures, facility layout requirements, staffing, programming, public and staff health and safety requirements. We understand and recognize that some of the protocols pose challenges for some people and they may not work for everyone. The protocol not allowing spectators in the facility at this time is in place to ensure that the Provincial Health Order for mass gatherings is maintained at all times. As an example, at the Nanaimo Ice Centre there are two ice surfaces open which means that during any given ice session there could be up to 48 skaters (max. 24 per ice surface) on the ice between the two arenas. This example shows how quickly an arena can reach 50 people and this is without having spectators in the facility. If one spectator enters the facility per player this number grows to 96 exceeding the mass gathering order, which would violate the health order and could lead to a \$2000 fine.

As we move towards the “new normal” we will continually be reviewing, updating and adjusting our safety protocols as provincial health directives allow and as we assess the feasibility and impact of changing the existing protocols. The City will also consider the feedback received from community in the decision making process. The City of Nanaimo remains committed to working with Nanaimo Minor Hockey and all community user groups to find creative solutions to address the concerns that have been brought forward by the community while ensuring that all provincial health orders are being complied with. The City of Nanaimo’s Director of Recreation and Culture is part of a province wide network that meets weekly to discuss and adjust to the ongoing changes in regulations, provincial orders and to ensure consistency as communities across the province restart and reopen recreation facilities and services.

The City also recognizes that the pandemic is ongoing and while returning to sports is important the most important thing is the health and safety of the community and doing everything we can to prevent the transmission of COVID19.

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we work through these unprecedented times.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Damon Johnston". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Damon Johnston damon.johnston@nanaimo.ca

Arenas Manager

City of Nanaimo Parks, Recreation & Culture