



NORTHERN ONTARIO HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

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Green Armband Initiative Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) As of September 14, 2022

For the purposes of this document, “minor Officials” refers to Officials who are under the age of 18.

What is the Green Armband initiative?

The green armband initiative was introduced in Montreal in January 2020 and subsequently by Hockey Eastern Ontario during the 2021/2022 season and is being implemented by the NOHA for the 2022/2023 season. All Officials below the age of 18 years old are required to wear a green armband to identify them as a minor. The wearing of the armband is to highlight the age of the Official regardless of the level of hockey that they are working.

As part of this initiative, there will also be increased sanctions against team officials and spectators that are penalized for abuse or harassment of minor (below the age of 18) Officials. Education will also be provided to players, parents, officials, and team officials about abuse and harassment of officials.

Why are we implementing the green armband initiative in the NOHA?

Abuse and harassment of Officials continues to be an issue for Officials. While the vast majority of team officials and spectators treat officials with respect, there are still issues that need to be addressed. It is anticipated that introducing the green armband to minor Officials will highlight for participants that abuse and harassment of Officials continues to be a problem in our games, especially for minor Officials.

Approximately 1/3 of all Officials in NOHA are under the age of 18. They represent the lifeblood of our minor hockey officiating program. It is important that the hockey community works together to protect the physical and psychological well-being of these minors. Requiring minor Officials to wear a green armband will identify to all participants that the Official working the game is under the age of 18.

It is important that individuals who wish to harass and abuse Officials know that some of these Officials are minors under the law and be reminded that this behaviour is unacceptable. **It needs to be highlighted that the wearing of a green armband reflects the Official’s age and NOT of their skill level as an Official. ALL Officials under the age of 18 will be required to wear the green armband regardless of their skill level or level of hockey that they are working.**



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When does the green armband initiative officially take effect?

The initiative will officially begin at the start of the 2022/2023 hockey season with all impacted Officials required to wear the green armband no later than October 15, 2022, or whenever they receive their green armband, whichever comes first.

Will Officials wear green armbands on both arms?

No. Officials will only wear one green armband on the left arm above the elbow in the same place as red armbands for Referees are normally worn.

Do Officials have to pay for the green armband?

No. The green armbands will be paid for by the NOHA and will be distributed by the District Referee-in-Chief, or when necessary, will be mailed directly to the Official.

Is it only the Referee who wears the green armband?

All Officials on the ice who are under the age of 18 will wear the green armband regardless of whether they are working as the Referee or Linesperson.

Do Officials still wear the red armband if they are working a game as a Referee?

Yes, the Official working as a Referee will wear the red armbands for games. The green armband will then be placed over the red armband on the left arm only. The red armband will be worn normally on the right arm.

Will Officials wear a green armband if they are working Rep games?

Yes, all Officials under the age of 18 will wear a green armband regardless of the level of hockey they are working. **The armband is being worn to identify the Official as being a minor and has nothing to do with the level of hockey being worked or their skill level as an Official.**

Do only new Officials have to wear green armbands?

No, all Officials under the age of 18 must wear a green armband beginning from the 2022-2023 season. This includes brand new Officials (under the age of 18) as well as Officials who are returning from officiating in a previous season. There is no grandfather clause for Officials who have already started officiating before the initiative was introduced. New Officials who are over the age of 18 are not required to wear a green armband.



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What if an Official refuses to wear the green armband?

For the initiative to be successful and have the desired impact, all Officials under the age of 18 need to do their part and wear the green armband. As the green armband is part of the required uniform for Officials working in NOHA, not wearing it may lead to disciplinary action similar to other dress code violations. If an Official has concerns about wearing the green armband, they should contact their District Referee-in-Chief. We welcome and encourage your feedback both positive and critical of this initiative.

When does an Official stop wearing the green armband?

Officials who are required to wear the green armband may stop doing so on the date of their 18th birthday. This means that even if they are in their 18th year, they must still wear the armband until their birthday even if that falls in the middle of a season. For example, if an Official starts the season at 17 years old and their birthday is on February 12th, they must continue to wear the armband until February 11th. The goal of this objective is to identify minor Officials to game participants. An Official is still considered a minor until such time as they reach the age of majority (their 18th birthday).

Will there be increased discipline for team officials and spectators who abuse or harass green armband Officials? Which penalties will result in increased sanctions?

Yes, team officials who abuse or harass Officials who are wearing a green armband will face increased supplemental discipline compared to team officials who abuse or harass Officials who are not wearing a green armband. The NOHA does not condone any abuse or harassment of Officials.

Infractions impacted include:

- Game Misconduct – Unsportsmanlike Conduct (11.1)
- Game Misconduct – Disrespectful, Abusive, and Harassing Behaviour (11.2)
- Gross Misconduct – Travesty of the Game (11.2F)
- Gross Misconduct – Discrimination (11.4)
- Match Penalty – Attempted Strike (11.5A)
- Match Penalty – Deliberate, Touch, Hold, Push (11.5B)
- Match Penalty – Deliberate Strike, Trip, Body Check (11.5C)

Any Game Misconduct or Gross Misconduct penalty involving a green armband Official or at the U9 and U11 age category will be **doubled** from the OHF Minimum Suspension List.

For any Match Penalty identified above, the hearing panel will take into consideration that a minor Official was involved in the incident when determining sanction(s).



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What conditions must occur for the increased supplementary discipline to be imposed against a team official?

Regardless of whether the actions are directed at a minor Official or not, any of the penalties previously identified that are assessed in a game that involves an Official with a green armband or at the U9 or U11 age category will result in supplemental discipline.

How will the NOHA know if a suspendable penalty was assessed during a game with a minor Official?

We encourage reports submitted on GameSheetInc. or sent in via e-mail using the online suspension report form to identify that there was an Official wearing a green armband who worked the specific game where a penalty was assessed.

The NOHA handles all suspensions internally and will endeavour to review the names of the Officials as well before sending a suspension notice to Associations.

How will the NOHA promote this initiative?

Presentations will be offered virtually for Association/Single Entry Team representatives, team officials, parents, and Officials.

The NOHA is also in the process of producing posters which will be mailed to our Associations to be displayed in arenas.

Finally, continuous promotion of the initiative will take place via the NOHA website, Facebook, and Twitter accounts.

How will success of the initiative be measured?

Through GameSheetInc., the NOHA will have the ability to compare the number and types of infractions given to team officials for abuse and harassment of Officials before the initiative to after the initiative.

The NOHA will also conduct surveys with the various stakeholders during the season to gather feedback on the success of the initiative and we will continue to conduct surveys with Officials at the end of each season to determine why Officials may choose to not return.



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Will this initiative eliminate all forms of abuse and harassment of Officials?

We know that many Officials leave the game due to abuse and harassment from team officials and spectators. We also know that the number of Officials in the NOHA has decreased significantly since the 2019/2020 season. To that end, this is one more step that we are taking to help reduce this negative behaviour toward Officials.

The NOHA will require all stakeholders to play a role in reducing abuse and harassment of Officials.