



For Immediate Release

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USA Hockey To Require Use of Neck Laceration Protection *New Rule Change To Go In Effect on August 1, 2024*

St. Paul, MN – January 28nd, 2024 – At its Winter meetings today in Orlando, FL, the USA Hockey Congress approved legislation that will require the use of neck laceration protection (neck guards) for players in all age classifications, other than adults, as well as for all on-ice officials under the age of 18. Neck guards will be required effective August 1, 2024 and must be worn during all games and practices. Minnesota Hockey, as an affiliate member of USA Hockey, adheres to the rules and regulations as put forth by USA Hockey. Today’s rule change will apply to all of Minnesota Hockey’s (13) Districts and (130) plus member Associations.

USA Hockey has long recommended the use of neck laceration protection as well as cut resistant protection for other vulnerable areas of the body. In November 2023, the USA Hockey Safety and Protective Equipment Committee, at the request of the USA Hockey Board of Directors, began looking at potential rule modifications specifically related to neck laceration protection. The work of this committee and their overall evaluation was instrumental in forming the rule changes adopted today during USA Hockey’s Congress.

“The safety of our members has always been paramount and will remain at the forefront of our efforts now and into the future,” said MN Hockey President Steve Oleheiser. “We will continue to work closely with all relevant stakeholders close to and affected by this rule adoption as we work through its implementation as a mandatory equipment item.”

An official USA Hockey statement regarding this change may be found on the USA Hockey website at: https://www.usahockey.com/news_article/show/1298379