

November, 2001

(AMENDED)

FACT SHEET

MOUTHGUARDS

The OMHA adopted a policy position at its' Annual General Meeting in June, 2000 for the mandatory use of intra-oral mouth guard protection by each player participating in an Ontario Minor Hockey Association game or practice. At the Annual General Meeting in June of 2001 the final policy regarding the use of an intra-oral mouthguard and the specifications for acceptable mouthguards were presented to the membership. The policy and specifications are as follows:

Intra-oral Mouthguard Policy:

The mandatory use of a mouth guard product for each player participating in an Ontario Minor Hockey Association game or practice shall at all times while engaged in play or practices, practice drills or scrimmages on the ice surface wear an intra-oral mouth guard that conforms to the specifications set out by the Association as approved as suitable for use by the team's trainer.

Intra-oral Mouthguard Specifications:

An Intra-oral Mouthguard will:

- Be of any colour,***
- Not be clear or translucent in colour;***
- Be of one-piece (1) construction;***
- Be easily sized by the participant or the participant's parents;***
- Be of an even thickness from the front to the back of the device;***
- Engage the biting surface of all of the teeth of the upper jaw and the lower jaw;***
- Maintain alignment of the upper and lower jaw in a neutral position;***
- Be able to be attached externally to the face mask or shield, or be form fitted or custom fitted to the teeth, and***
- In the case of non-contact play will provide not less than one (1) millimeter of shock absorbent thickness between the teeth of the upper and lower jaw of a player, and***
- In the case of contact play will provide not less than two (2) millimeters of shock absorbent thickness between the teeth of the upper and lower jaw of a player.***

What The Standard Means

Be of any colour:

The mouthguard may be of any colour, this is not an issue for the OMHA.

Not be clear or translucent in colour:

An intra-oral mouthguard must be easily seen when the mouth of a player is opened. This is essential in order that on-ice officials can enforce the policy and for emergency medical services personnel to be able to rapidly determine if an injured player has a mouthguard in place.

Be of one-piece (1) construction:

The finished product must be a single object. Acceptable intra-oral mouth-guards may be constructed of laminated materials, however the materials used in the construction of a mouthguard will not de-laminate or separate while in normal use.

Be easily sized by the participant or the participant's parents:

The instructions provided by a manufacturer or supplier of intra-oral mouthguards will provide players/parents with easily understandable instructions on how to size and fit a mouthguard to a player.

Be of an even thickness from the front to the back of the device:

The thickness of the mouthguard between the upper and lower teeth shall be consistent from the back to the front of the device.

Engage the biting surface of all teeth of the upper jaw and the lower jaw:

An approved mouthguard will come into contact with the biting surface of all of the teeth of both the upper and lower jaw when the mouthguard is properly inserted into the mouth. When fitting a mouthguard, special attention needs to be taken to ensure that **the biting surface of** all teeth from the front to the rear most **teeth** are in contact with the biting surface of the mouthguard.

Maintain alignment of the upper and lower jaw in a neutral position:

A mouthguard will, when fitted, hold the lower jaw in a natural or neutral position in relation to the upper jaw for the individual player. An approved mouthguard will not cause the lower jaw to be forced either forward or backward from its normal position.

Be able to be attached externally to the facemask or shield, or be form fitted or custom fitted to the teeth:

If an approved mouthguard has not been custom fitted by a dentist or dental hygienist, the mouthguard must have a means by which it can be attached to the cage or visor that is attached to the player's helmet. Mouthguards that are custom fitted by a dentist or dental hygienist do not

require an external attachment or lanyard to connect them to the facemask or shield.

In the case of non-contact play will provide not less than one (1) millimeter of shock absorbent thickness between the teeth of the upper and lower jaw of a player.

In the case of contact play will provide not less than two (2) millimeters of shock absorbent thickness between the teeth of the upper and lower jaw of a player:

A mouthguard is considered to be compliant with the OMHA standard when there is respectively one (1) or two (2) millimeters of thickness remaining between the teeth of the upper and lower jaw. Any mouthguard where the thickness respectively is less than one (1) or two (2) millimeters of thickness between the teeth of the upper and lower jaw is no longer compliant with the standard. Also, any mouthguard that has been chewed through or has cracks or breaks in its surface is no longer compliant and must be replaced.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Implementation Date?

Players engaged in play or practices are required to have an approved mouthguard in use on and after January 1, 2002.

Is there a list of Approved Products?

The OMHA neither endorses nor recommends any particular product or manufacturer. Any intra-oral mouthguard product that meets the stated specifications set out by the OMHA is acceptable for use. It is essential that local associations and team trainers become familiar with this policy and the specifications of acceptable intra-oral mouthguards.

Who is responsible for ensuring that the mouthguard policy is implemented?

The responsibility to ensure implementation involves all coaches, trainers, officials and association executive. It is also essential that parents, public safety organizations, medical and injury prevention proponents and agencies become familiar with and lend support to the principle of using mouthguards in the game of hockey.

What are the sanctions, who is responsible for implementation?

If it becomes apparent that a player is not wearing an approved mouthguard during play, the referee, on becoming aware of the situation, will direct that the player be removed from play until such time as the player has a mouthguard in place.

Do the 'boil and bite' style of mouthguards meet the OMHA policy?

Yes, so long as it conforms to the specified standards as described.

Does an approved mouthguard have to have a bite bar that engages all of a players teeth?

Yes, the biting surface of all of a players teeth must be able to bite down on a mouthguard in order for it to be approved.

Does it matter what type of material or strap is used to attach a mouthguard to the facemask or shield of a hockey player?

It does not matter what type of material is used, however the external strap or lanyard that is used to attach the mouthguard to the facemask or shield must be attached to the mouthguard and be approved by the mouthguard manufacturer of the mouthguard. Mouthguards do not meet the OMHA specification if the mouthguard is attached to the facemask or shield by a means other than one that is approved by the mouthguard manufacturer.

Does the Policy apply to Goaltenders?

Yes, the policy applies to all players including goaltenders.