

Ontario Hockey Federation Centralizes Vulnerable Sector Check Process, Leading the Way in Youth Sport Safety

Cambridge, Ontario – November 14, 2024 – The Ontario Hockey Federation (OHF) is proud to announce the successful launch of its Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC) process across its Member organizations: ALLIANCE Hockey, Greater Toronto Hockey League (GTHL), Northern Ontario Hockey Association (NOHA), Ontario Hockey Association (OHA), Ontario Minor Hockey Association (OMHA) and the Ontario Women’s Hockey Association (OWHA). This major initiative underscores the OHF’s ongoing commitment to enhancing safety, integrity, and security within hockey communities across the province, particularly for young participants.

Since the start of the centralized screening initiative in April 2024, over **45,000** screenings have been successfully processed across the OHF’s organizations.

The new centralized VSC process streamlines and strengthens background checks for all involved in youth hockey, ensuring that vulnerable sector checks are conducted with greater efficiency. By adopting this standardized approach, the OHF reaffirms its dedication to creating a safe and supportive environment for the next generation of hockey players.

In a statement, The Honourable Neil Lumsden, Minister of Sport, applauded the OHF’s initiative for sport safety:

“Today’s announcement marks a significant step forward to ensure the safety of our hockey players,” said Minister Lumsden. “The centralized Vulnerable Sector Check process is a testament to OHF’s commitment to safe sport and aligns with the government’s dedication to creating a secure environment where athletes can thrive while helping to build a safer, stronger sporting community.”

The collaboration between OHF and its Members ensures that all individuals working with young participants are properly vetted and monitored. This move aligns with national sport safety standards and further promotes transparency and trust within hockey programs.

Phillip McKee, Ontario Hockey Federation Executive Director, expressed his passion for the program:

“By centralizing the VSC process, we are not only enhancing the safety of our young athletes, but we are also ensuring that we lead the charge in sport safety innovation. Having completed over 45,000 screenings to date, this initiative is a testament to our continued efforts to foster a positive and safe sporting experience for all.”

Scott Oakman, Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer at the Greater Toronto Hockey League (GTHL), commended the program’s success:

“The implementation of a centralized background check system has undoubtedly made the game safer for players,” said Oakman. “This is an excellent foundation to build upon and will eventually lessen the burden on volunteers and staff within OHF Member organizations and their affiliates. Most importantly, it ensures a consistent and thorough process when

reviewing the backgrounds of individuals who have direct contact with players in our programs.”

The new VSC process is part of OHF's broader initiative to modernize and streamline administrative functions while maintaining the highest standards of accountability and protection in youth hockey. This centralization effort will reduce administrative burden, allowing more time and resources to focus on developing players and enhancing their hockey experience.

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About Ontario Hockey Federation

The Ontario Hockey Federation (OHF) is the largest member of Hockey Canada operating alongside Hockey Eastern Ontario (HEO) and Hockey Northwestern Ontario (HNO) as the Hockey Canada governing bodies for amateur hockey in Ontario. Recognized as a Provincial Sport Organization for the sport of hockey by the Province of Ontario, the OHF operates within a structure that is comprised of seven Members: the Minor Hockey Alliance of Ontario (ALLIANCE), Greater Toronto Hockey League (GTHL), Northern Ontario Hockey Association (NOHA), Ontario Hockey Association (OHA), Ontario Hockey League (OHL), Ontario Minor Hockey Association (OMHA), and Ontario Women's Hockey Association (OWHA). From season to season the OHF provides administrative resources, coordinates programs, services and events for hockey participants and the Members.