


<p> <b>President Tim Lystila</b>  <b>Vice President Kristin Knapp</b>  <b>Secretary Jill DuBord</b>  <b>Treasurer Jacob Mayer</b>  <b>Perry Wooden</b>  <b>Brett Nelson</b>  <b>Kevin Yohe</b> </p>	 <p> <b>Iron Range Hockey Association</b>  <b>P.O. Box 105</b>  <b>Negaunee, MI 49866</b>  <b><a href="http://www.ironrangehockey.com">www.ironrangehockey.com</a></b> </p>	<p> <b>Dale Hopper</b>  <b>Eric Beckman</b>  <b>Michael Hubbard</b>  <b>Sarah Bekkala</b>  <b>Jill Dix</b>  <b>Kristin Lystila</b> </p>
---	---	---

## IRHA neck guard policy

As of January 3rd, 2024 all IRHA players will be required to wear a bibbed neck guard or cut proof shirt with built in neck guard, any time they are on ice as a part of the IRHA, this includes in a practice or games. A neckguard without a bibbed neck or shirt is not acceptable, as it does not properly cover the neck at all times during play. This is for all levels of hockey under the Iron Range Hockey Association. Exceptions will be made in the first year (2024) of this policy if suppliers are NOT able to maintain stock. This policy comes from the multiple children and professional hockey players that have been seriously injured or killed from skate contact to the neck. This policy is in an effort to improve the safety and well being of all players of Iron Range Hockey Association and follows USA Hockey's newly adopted recommendation as stated:

Saturday, November 11, 2023

At its meeting today, the USA Hockey Board of Directors unanimously voted to request the USA Hockey Safety and Protective Equipment Committee begin the process of recommending potential rule changes regarding neck laceration protection. The intention of this effort is to advance solutions that best serve all of our members.

Any potential rule change proposal(s) could be addressed as early as USA Hockey's Winter Meeting in January 2024.

USA Hockey continues to recommend that all players wear a neck laceration protector that covers as much of the neck area as possible, in addition to cut-resistant socks, sleeves or undergarments.

## Neck Laceration Protectors

USA Hockey is very concerned about neck lacerations and the potential catastrophic involvement of arteries, veins and nerves.

There is sparse data on neck laceration prevalence, severity and neck laceration protector (neck guard) effectiveness.

### Highlights of research conducted by USA Hockey on Neck Laceration Protectors:

- Current neck laceration protector designs *do not eliminate the risk* of a neck laceration: 27% of players who sustained a neck laceration were wearing a "neck guard" at the time of the injury.

- Neck lacerations are potentially catastrophic, but most are superficial: 20 (61%) required bandaging only, 11 were sutured and 2 were glued.
- Damage to the neck guard is not an indicator of the cut resistance of a neck guard.
- Neck laceration protectors with Spectra fibers were the most cut resistant.
- Some neck laceration protectors shrink after washing, which may decrease surface area, expose more of the neck and reduce effectiveness.
- Neck laceration protectors can decrease cervical spine range of motion.

### **USA Hockey Neck Laceration Protector Policy**

USA Hockey recommends that all players wear a neck laceration protector, choosing a design that covers as much of the neck area as possible. Further research & improved standards testing will better determine the effectiveness of neck laceration protectors.

