

## How to Build a Hockey League

1. **Level of interest:** Talk to the hockey people within the community and surrounding areas. Visit the local arenas and discuss the possibility of a new league with the arena personnel, referees, and players.
2. **What type of league:** Decide what type of league to start. After speaking with the hockey people and getting an understanding of the hockey in the community you will know what types of leagues already exist, and who plays in them. Based on this information you will need to decide if your league will be recreational or competitive, and if it will be for men, women, or co-ed. Another factor to consider is the age group it will serve, will it be for 19+, 35+ oldtimers, or seniors.
3. **Ice time:** Meet with the local arena ice booking staff to ensure there is available ice time, and find what time slots are open. Based on the interest around the community, decide on how many teams will be part of the league and how many games each team will play. Book the necessary ice time to meet the requirements.
4. **Fees and registration:** Develop a breakdown of all costs associated with the league. Always discuss the costs with other league organizers, this way you can tap into their experience and make sure you account for all costs. From the cost breakdown create a budget to manage the league. Based on the research and league costs set registration fees per player/team. Host a league registration day, where team representatives sign up and pay a deposit for their team entry. Some things to consider when setting fees are the cost for ice time, referees, timekeepers, jerseys, prizing, and banquets.
5. **Advertise:** Spread the word of a new league around town. Re-visit the local arenas and distribute and post promotional information, email the community hockey people and organizers, post the information on free classified websites such as [kijiji.ca](http://kijiji.ca), and utilize CARHA Hockey's national network.
6. **League principles:** Create the structure and principles that the league will use as operating guidelines. League principles include developing league rules, suspension guidelines, constitution, executives, and operating structure. Visit CARHA Hockey's Resources page for sample league principle documents.
7. **League format:** Based on ice time availability and the number of teams, you will determine the format and structure of the league. You will need to decide how many games each team will play and the length of each game. Also, you need to determine if the league will host an annual draft to assign players to teams, or if it will be a team based league with the same players returning to the same team each year. With the allotment of ice time you receive you can either have playoffs at the end of the season or play a full regular season and the team with the most points is the champion.
8. **Hockey insurance:** As the league executive it is important to have league liability coverage to protect yourself from being liable in third party claims. Also, as a requirement to rent ice, many municipalities across Canada require \$2 million in liability insurance coverage. Contact CARHA Hockey to get set up for your league hockey insurance program covering all

players, coaches, managers, trainers, executives, and sponsors. Insuring the league provides added benefits and safety for the players.

9. **League operations:** As members of CARHA Hockey, leagues receive many of the tools necessary to operate successfully. As part of the CARHA Hockey Membership the league receives a free website, access to a scheduling software application, and stats tracking program. Develop a league logo and purchase team jerseys, socks, and league merchandise from CARHA Hockey and receive competitive prices through CARHA Hockey's supplier relationships. Through the arena organize the timekeepers, and referees. If the league needs referees, visit CARHA Hockey's National Referee Registry and source out refs from the surrounding communities.
10. **Team jerseys:** If the league decides to provide jerseys you will have to order through a supplier. Most municipalities have a local promotions company that can order the jerseys and screen/embroider the logo and numbers. CARHA Hockey can also help by leveraging our supplier relationships and provide competitive prices through our bulk order preferential pricing.
11. **League sponsor:** Get the support of the local business community. Present the league to local businesses such as restaurants and bars, printing and design companies, and sporting goods stores. Partner with these businesses to have them support your league with financial and in-kind contributions, and in return drive the league participant business to the establishments. Often leagues will be able to negotiate preferred pricing and rates for their participants with the sponsoring businesses.
12. **Host a tournament:** To provide excitement to the league host a league tournament and include other teams from the community and surrounding towns. Work with CARHA Hockey and access our Tournament Host Support Package to provide you with the necessary tools for operating a tournament. Also, you will need to provide prizing for the division finalists and champions. The league's sponsors often donate prizes, and for the rest of the prizing you have access to CARHA Hockey's Hockey Essentials.
13. **Year-end banquet:** To conclude the season it is often good to host a league banquet, include dinner and drinks, entertainment, and player awards and prizing. Hosting a banquet will be an added cost, so make sure you plan for it in the budget. If you plan to serve alcohol and have a Special Occasions Permit, CARHA Hockey helps you meet the legal alcohol service requirements and provides Host Liquor Liability.

### **Other Things to Consider**

**Open house:** after you have confirmed all of the details and worked out the logistics of the league you may wish to host a league open house. The open house will be used to introduce the hockey league to the community.

**Finding new players:** If the league needs to recruit some new talent then contact CARHA Hockey and take advantage of our national network of hockey members and let us connect you with the hockey communities in Canada.