

# Head, Face and Eye (HFE) Protection Guidance Domestic League and Events

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This guidance is intended for those playing hockey at **domestic leagues, events and competitions**, and takes account of our responsibilities, our duty of care and our goal to establish an inclusive, safe, fair and inspiring sporting environment that always contributes to a high-quality participant experience. This guidance is not intended to cover international competition.

## 2 Purpose

- 2.1 England Hockey (EH) has produced this Guidance to provide acceptable adaptations of the FIH Rules regarding “4. Players’ clothing and equipment”, with specific reference to head, face, and eye protection (HFE protection).

## 3 FIH Regulations

- 3.1 **FIH Rules of Hockey (4.2):** *“Field players are permitted to wear throughout a match for medical reasons only a smooth preferably transparent or single coloured face mask which closely fits the face, soft protective head- covering or eye protection in the form of plastic goggles (i.e. goggles with a soft-covered frame and plastic lenses); the medical reasons must be assessed by an appropriate authority and the player concerned must understand the possible implications of playing with the medical condition;”*

In accordance with the FIH Rules of Hockey (4.2), England Hockey will act as the appropriate authority for assessing medical reasons to wear head, face, and eye protection for players.

## 4 Summary

- 4.1 Under certain conditions approval to wear head, face or eye (HFE) protection, during a hockey match, may be granted by England Hockey.

Players wishing to wear HFE protection may receive approval from England Hockey if they are able to meet the following criteria:



- 4.1 The player has a genuine medical reason for needing HFE protection;
- 4.2 The player can provide a letter of confirmation from an appropriate medical practitioner;
- 4.3 Wearing the HFE protection:
  - 4.3.1 should not substantially restrict the player's normal field of vision;
  - 4.3.2 poses no obvious hazard to themselves (the player) or other players;
  - 4.3.3 is within the FIH Rules (rule 4.2) (see above).
- 4.2 Any head, face or eye protection worn should be consistent with the FIH rule (rule 4.2), being:
  - 4.2.1 smooth and preferably transparent or single coloured face mask which closely fits the face;
  - 4.2.2 soft protective head-covering; or
  - 4.2.3 soft eye protection in the form of plastic goggles (i.e., goggles with a soft-covered frame and plastic lenses).
- 4.3 Please refer to Appendix A for all references.
- 4.4 England Hockey reserve the right to reassess approval given to a player to wear head, face and/or eye protection at any time. Before wearing HFE protection, England Hockey recommends player's check they have appropriate personal liability insurance coverage.

**Any queries, or requests for approval to wear HFE protection should be sent to [Health.Safety@englandhockey.co.uk](mailto:Health.Safety@englandhockey.co.uk)**

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## Appendix A

### Construction, Materials, and Safety

To ensure HFE protection is consistent with the FIH rules, it should be a smooth and preferably transparent or single coloured face mask which closely fits the face; a soft protective head-covering; or eye protection in the form of plastic goggles (i.e. goggles with a soft-covered frame and plastic lenses). Cage-type goggles and other protection that protrudes from the face are not allowed at any time for field play.

The player should ensure wearing HFE protection does not substantially restrict any normal field of vision; and make sure it does not constitute a physical danger to themselves (the player), or other players.

Players are not permitted, when wearing HFE protection, to conduct themselves in a manner which is dangerous to other players by taking advantage of the protective equipment they wear.

There is no international standard for HFE protection in hockey and as such the FIH and England Hockey are unable to recommend any particular product, brand or solution.

### Prescription Glasses

For player's requiring prescription glasses whilst playing hockey, an up-to-date prescription from a qualified optician is sufficient evidence, and approval from England Hockey can be assumed.

### Guidance for Players

Under certain conditions approval to wear HFE protection may be granted for genuine medical reasons. All players competing in domestic competition/leagues should request approval from England Hockey in advance.

Approval to wear HFE protection may be granted by England Hockey, when recommended by a qualified medical practitioner for genuine medical reasons (including to protect an existing injury or a vulnerable previous injury). This does not include the use of HFE protection as a precautionary measure, in the absence of injury, to mitigate usual hockey risk.

The player must be aware of and understand the possible implications of playing with the medical condition. The player should check they have appropriate personal liability insurance coverage (via their Club or individually).

### For players competing in leagues/events

Players competing in leagues/competition are required to apply for and obtain approval from England Hockey before wearing HFE protection during hockey activity. An application form can be found [here](#)

If England Hockey approve the wearing of HFE for genuine medical reasons, the player should be prepared to provide evidence (e.g. a copy of the approval letter) to their domestic league/event upon request.

Domestic league/event organisers retain the right to refuse the wearing of HFE protection if they have a genuine concern the HFE protection you wish to wear poses a hazard/safety



concern to yourself, or other players (e.g. does not conform to FIH rule 4.2 and set out within this document).

### **Guidance for Medical Practitioners**

For England Hockey to consider the approval of wearing HFE protection during hockey activity the player should provide supporting documentation from their medical practitioner. This should be in writing and address the clinical justification for the player requiring HFE protection (e.g. goggles or mask). This does not include the use of HFE protection as a precautionary measure, in the absence of injury, to mitigate usual hockey risk.

It is expected that the player's medical practitioner will have explained the risks and possible implications of playing with the stated medical condition.

### **Guidance for Domestic League/Event Organisers Challenging the use of HFE protection**

Regardless of approval from England Hockey to wear HFE protection, league/event organisers can refuse a player to wear HFE protection if they consider the HFE protection poses a genuine safety concern or hazard to the player or any other player on the field, or does not conform to the

### **Appendix A**

**Construction, Materials, and Safety** guidance set out in this document (FIH rule 4.2).

Regardless of England Hockey's approval to wear HFE protection, any player wishing to wear HFE protection should ensure it:

- does not substantially restrict the player's normal field of vision;
- poses no obvious hazard to themselves (the player) or other players;
- is smooth and preferably transparent or single coloured face mask which closely fits the face;
- is a soft protective head-covering; or
- is soft eye protection in the form of plastic goggles (i.e., goggles with a soft-covered frame and plastic lenses).

If the HFE protection to be worn violates any of the above criteria, and there are genuine safety concerns of wearing the HFE protection for the player, or any other player, the league/event organisers can refuse the player's request to wear HFE protection during the match/event.

### **Contact Us**

To ensure England Hockey can continue to support the hockey community, please report any HFE protection issues (inc. refusal to wear HFE protection), concerns or feedback to England Hockey [health.safety@englandhockey.co.uk](mailto:health.safety@englandhockey.co.uk), as soon as practicable.