

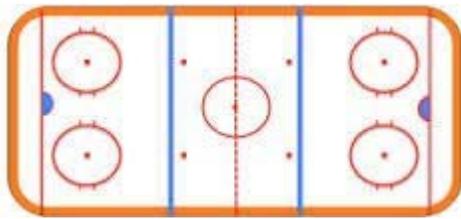
Ice Hockey Dasherboard Safety Zone (Look-up Line) Installation Guideline

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August 2014

Introduction

Different media outlets have been openly discussing the benefits of community rinks installing a 101.6cm (40in) painted “look-up line” around the dashboards. This painted area is intended to perform as a player hit risk reduction tool much like a warning track at a ball diamond warns the player that outfield wall contact is within close proximity. It is another attempt to reduce player hit from behind injuries.



Background

These most recent discussions are being driven from the United States as USA Hockey considered the installation of an orange coloured painted track safety zone option. Some Ontario hockey rinks experimented with this same concept 20+years earlier, but with a smaller blue coloured safety zone area. As of this date, no known hockey governing sporting body has made a rule change to this effect leaving the installation option decision with each local league and/or facility management to consider.

Other Ontario Player Safety Programs

The **Safety Towards Other Players (STOP)** Program began in Windsor almost 20-years ago in hopes of raising awareness of the dangers of checking-from-behind in hockey. Led by the Ontario Minor Hockey Association, the STOP Program is now mandatory in many hockey associations around the world.

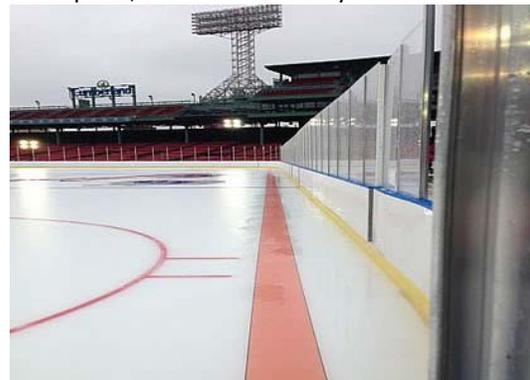


What is at Risk?

Understanding and respecting the roles of each of the partners in ice rink use and operations is an important part of a safe environment. The owner of the rink through occupiers liability must provide a safe and serviceable recreation environment. Ice, dashboards, indoor air quality are prime examples of this responsibility. The user under the same law must ensure that those who participate in any organized sport are safe. The question then becomes is the proposed painted safety zone required to make the facility safe or the program safer? Facility management who install such a safety zone as a courtesy may in fact be unintentionally stating that the facility recognizes the risks of ice hockey thus exposing their operation legally. The test would be one of reasonableness. The Court would look to industry standards and best practices, as well as all of the individual facts of the case scenario. While responding to a specific request in writing from the hockey league to assist their efforts in reducing the risk of injury in their sport might be considered a more positive legal position for the facility.

Other Facility Users

If a facility is considering the safety zone installation, other sporting user groups of the facility should also be considered in advance of the installation. Although ice hockey may request the installation, other users may find it as a distraction to their program. Additionally, summer sports must be considered. If such a safety zone is being installed for ice sports, owners may need to ask themselves why should it not be painted on the concrete for off-season sports, such as ball hockey or lacrosse?



Will the Line Become Ineffective?

The question of the effectiveness of the line over time as players become use to its placement needs to be considered. If installed, a long-term commitment by all users to build the line into training materials and practices would be required to truly make the line an effective safety tool. Such a partnership commitment should be expressed in writing. Possibly as part the annual contractual relationship with users.

Ice Thickness over the Line

If installed the line should be installed at the same depth as all other sport markings and logos. The ORFA continues to promote an ice barrier of 1.9-2.54cm (.75-1in.) of ice be in place to protect skaters from possible trip hazards.

Ice Changeover Considerations

Facilities that paint over sport markings for specialty Events, such as figure skating competitions, or shows will need to increase the preparation time as the look-up line will need to be first whitened out along with all other sport markings. Considering that the line may be tight to the dashboards, additional staff time to edge to cleanly remove all white paint may also need to be considered.

Maintenance of the Safety Zone

Once installed the maintenance of the paint will be an important part of daily operations, as faded or lost safety zones may be a critical part of determining at fault of any potential legal proceedings. Adding this inspection to daily ice condition logs should be considered.



Cost of Installation

It has been estimated that the required additional paint will be \$350-500 with shipping costs and taxes varying. Additional staff time will also be required for both installing and removal at season end as ice along the dashboards is often the most difficult to collect. Is this an additional facility cost or a direct chargeback to the league requesting the installation.

Conclusion

The ORFA continues to support facility risk reduction through awareness and careful consideration of how such tools are to be used. As always, risk reduction strategies should be discussed with your facilities insurance carriers risk department.

Other Resources

Just Cure Paralysis:

<http://justcureparalysis.org/look-up-line/>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A805yRHtO9U&feature=player_embedded

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