

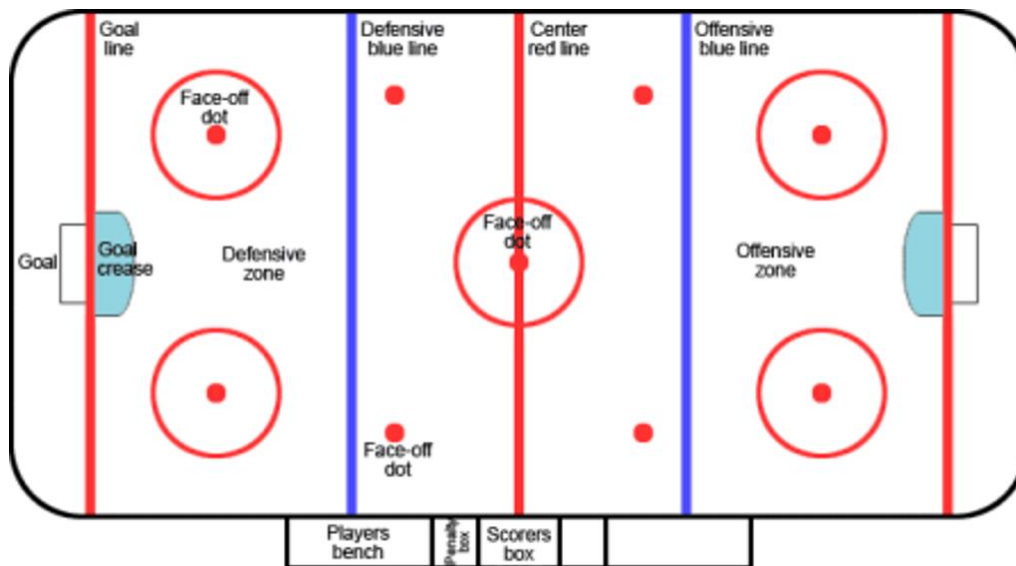
THE RULES

Ice Hockey has a complete set of rules that make it a very different game than any other sport. The rules are designed to provide a safe and positive playing environment while promoting skill development and a passion for the game of hockey.

This page is designed to provide an overview on the most common rules and infractions seen in hockey. For a more in depth look, check out USA Hockey's [Mobile Rulebook](#).

Face-Offs: This is the method by which the puck is put into play. During a face-off, one player from each team lines up to face each other at one of the rink's nine face-off spots. The referee or linesman drops the puck between the players, who then battle for possession.

Offsides: This occurs when a player enters the offensive zone before the puck. It results in a stoppage of play and neutral zone faceoff.



Icing: When a defending player sends the puck, untouched, from behind the center red line across the opposing team's goal line in the offensive zone. This results in a stoppage of play and a faceoff in the offending team's defensive zone.

Hand Pass: Players in hockey are not allowed to play the puck with their hand outside of their defensive zone. When a player moves the puck to a teammate with his hand, the official blows the whistle, and there is a faceoff at the position where the puck was passed from. At no time can players close their hand on the puck.

High Stick: When the puck is played out of mid-air by a player whose stick is above shoulder height and a teammate is the next to touch the puck, a high stick infraction is called, resulting in a face off in that team's defensive zone.

Minor Penalties: Players can be assessed penalties for improper conduct on the ice. The most common penalties are minor penalties, in which players must sit in the penalty box for two minutes, or until the other team scores, while their team plays shorthanded. Here are the most common minor penalties:

- *Tripping:* Player uses stick, arm, or leg to take an opponent's feet out from under them.
- *High-Sticking:* Striking an opponent with the stick above shoulder level.
- *Slashing:* The act of swinging a player's stick at an opponent, whether contact is made or not.
- *Holding:* Player holds an opponent by using his hands, arms, or legs.
- *Interference:* Player interferes with or impedes the progress of an opponent who is not in possession of the puck.
- *Elbowing:* Involves the use of an extended elbow to perform an illegal body check.
- *Cross-Checking:* A check made with the stick while both hands are on the stick and arms extending to deliver the hit.
- *Hooking:* Using the stick in a manner that enables a player to restrain an opponent, typically through a pulling motion.
- *Boarding:* Checking an opponent in such a manner that causes the opponent to be thrown violently into the boards.
- *Roughing:* Involves the use of unnecessary roughness during play or between whistles.

Major Penalties: Major penalties are assessed for many of the same infractions that apply to minor penalties except they involve a greater degree of deliberate violence that can result in injury. The player who is serving the five-minute major must stay in the penalty box for the full five minute penalty time, regardless if a goal is scored on the "shorthanded" team.