



Recommended Practices for Hosting Inclusive Events

Overview

Working together to create more diverse and inclusive spaces takes effort from the entire team. Inclusive spaces require considering gender diversity, racial equity, empowering people with disabilities, and ensuring accessibility. When we do this, our events will be a more positive experience that foster creativity and learning for all. When people feel seen and respected, they can participate to their fullest.

The purpose of this resource is to assist the Skate Canada community by providing recommendations on inclusive practices in event planning and delivery. Items in this resource are *strong recommendations* to support this effort. Implementation of some recommendations may require learning, specific skills, relationship building with local Indigenous communities, or be constrained by venue and resourcing. We encourage intentional approaches for inclusive event planning and delivery, and this may involve long-term plans and staged implementation of the recommendations.

This resource is intended as a living document that will be regularly updated as we continue our learning, and as we hear from communities about how best to create equitable, accessible, diverse, and inclusive events. Regardless of identity or background, our members and audience should leave Skate Canada club, Section, or national events feeling excited and ready to take on what comes next. A more inclusive space can nurture inspiration and excitement!

Communications

Language and images on event webpages, emails, and forms should strive for diversity and inclusivity. Think about it: if the messaging and imagery always suggest only certain types of people are involved in skating, it deters those who do not identify with these images from even considering attending or participating.

Accessibility

- Ensure all communications and information meet provincial or federal accessibility standards. An easy step is to use the [accessibility tools](#) in Word, PowerPoint, and other programs, and to provide Alt text for all images. Video instructions or information should have closed captioning enabled.
- Website/promotional materials and the Announcement Package should have a pro-active statement on accessibility (this statement should also be included in skater welcome letters, correspondence with officials, volunteers, and others).
 - Example: "(Host Club or Section name) strives to host inclusive, accessible events that enable all individuals to engage fully. To request accommodation or for inquiries about accessibility, please contact (name, email, phone)."
- Include information about accessibility of venue (full accessibility, partial accessibility, not accessible), noting any limits on accessibility.
 - Example: "venue is partially accessible, viewing and dressing areas are fully accessible, food concession access has 4 stairs".



- Accessibility includes getting to the venue. Include information if the venue is accessible by public transportation, as well as links to accessible transportation options in the location (as applicable), and any other specific considerations.
 - Example: “[Venue] has accessible parking at the main entrance and at the athlete entrance. The venue is on public transportation routes, with the closest bus stop 400m from the venue entrance. Information on local public transportation can be accessed through [website or app], with information on accessible transportation options available through [link to local provider(s)]
 - If you are in a major metro area, Google has added [wheelchair accessible routes](#) to Google Maps on both desktop and mobile that can also be noted in the information, or a link provided
- Include specifics such as:
 - Accessible parking or seating.
 - Use of flash photography.
 - Any sort of strobe lights or flashing images that may cause seizures.
 - Distinctly amplified sounds/music.
 - Requests for interpretation services or assistive listening devices.
 - If possible, include pictures of the rink, entrance, and changing rooms. This can take various forms, such as: photos included in the welcome package, maps of layout of space, or a walk-through welcome video by an athlete or volunteer to familiarize participants with the spaces and posted to event website or social media (with link provided to participants)
- If possible, have a dedicated quiet or low sensory space separate from the warm-up area and include guidelines (no talking, no ‘warm up’, calm space).
- Above accessibility information can be communicated through the Announcement Package, Skater Welcome Letter, FAQ, and Event Webpage

Gender Inclusive Language

- Use gender inclusive language.
 - Example: “Good afternoon, everyone”, “Welcome, Skating Fans and Spectators”, “Welcome, Friends and Family”.
- Avoid gender binary phrases:
 - Instead of ‘men’ or ‘women’ → *everyone*
 - Instead of ‘guys’ → *folks, friends, colleagues, team, skaters*
 - Instead of “Ladies and Gentlemen” → *‘distinguished guests’*
- Use Skate Canada categories for events, including in social media postings and references to events:
 - Star 1 to 3 (no gender distinction).
 - Star 4/5, Pre-Juvenile & Juvenile Freeskate (boys/girls).
 - STAR 6 to Gold + Pre-Novice to Senior Singles (women and men).
 - Note: “Ladies” is not a Skate Canada category, and reference to events should be to women's event. ie: Junior Women, rather than Junior Ladies
 - Star and Podium Pathway Pairs and Ice Dance (Athlete A and Athlete B)
 - Artistic, Creative Improv, Showcase (no gendered categories)
 - Solo dance (lead or follow, no gendered categories)
 - Remember individuals compete in the category that aligns with their gender



- Use skater's name and/or refer to the skater/competitor/athlete.
- When creating documents use 'the skater(s)' instead of the gender binary 'he/she' or gender-specific terms
- Only use pronouns when these have been indicated by the individual.
- When asking for information about athletes' family members, use the term *Parent/Guardian* and provide space for two or more names to be listed. Avoid using the terms mother and father.
- Where contact information does not require legal guardianship for signature or permission, and is being requested to relay information such as competition schedule, you may choose to use parent/guardian/caregiver.

Skater Event Registration Forms

- Skater registration forms are not required to ask gender. The form can have a drop-down menu including all competition categories and the skater selects the appropriate competition category/categories.
- Where Skater registration forms include gender, the options should include: male, female, non-binary, choose not to answer
- For those who select 'non-binary' or 'choose not to answer', these options should link to another field for "competition gender category", with the options as male, female, or not applicable.
 - Note: Not applicable would be for categories that are not divided by gender (such as artistic, creative improv, Star 1-3, solo dance), for Dance and Pairs where a team is composed of '2 skaters' so gender identification is not required, or for synchronized skating

The On-Site Experience

We strive to create an event experience that is positive for all participants. This means ensuring every part of our event is inclusive and welcoming. It's thinking about the small details that can make a big difference in how a guest experiences the event. Considering inclusivity should be a part of planning for every event.

Indigenous Engagement

- Consider inclusion of a Greeting, Welcome, Honour Song, or teaching by an Indigenous Elder or Knowledge Keeper.
- Ensure *relationships are built and sustained* with those invited to participate, and that those invited to participate in the event are treated with respect and humility, protocols followed, and compensation provided.
 - For more information, see Skate Canada Indigenous Engagement and the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission Final Report and Recommendations, in particular Actions 87 -91](#)

Territorial Acknowledgement and Commitment to Reconciliation

- Include a territorial acknowledgement in opening ceremonies, in the program, and close to the registration desk (see appendix A below for more information).
 - **National Events:**



- For *in person*: territorial acknowledgement for the place where the event is taking place.
- For *virtual events*: announcer to acknowledge where they are located.
- For *virtual national events*: consider producing a video with territorial acknowledgements coming from across the country.
- **Club/Regional/Section Events:**
 - Check with your Section to see if there is a territorial acknowledgement they currently use.
 - Municipalities should also have a territorial acknowledgement that can guide you for your local area.
- Beyond the territorial acknowledgement that recognizes the land upon which the event takes place, undertake learning to further Reconciliation and work to develop customized reflection and commitment to Reconciliation for the event, and specific to the host Club or Section.

All-Gender Changerooms & Gender Inclusive Washrooms

- Indicate if all gender, gender-inclusive, and/or universal washrooms are available at the venue.
- It is highly recommended that change rooms include all gender changerooms, and communications should indicate if all gender changerooms are available.
 - Example A: For a Star 1 to Gold competition, the announcement and skater welcome letter might state: '*All change rooms will be all-gender change rooms, with change rooms assigned by event category.*'
 - Example B: For a Podium Pathway Qualifying Competition, the announcement and skater welcome letter might state: "*Change rooms are assigned by event category, with a separate all gender change room available.*"

Signage

- When it comes to all-gender signage for dressing rooms or washrooms (where available in the venue and you are providing signage), avoid those that show male or female figures as this reinforces a gender binary.
- Instead, choose signs that convey that the space is all gender.
 - Example: If the washroom is accessible by those using mobility aids such as wheelchairs or walkers, you can include the wheelchair pictogram
- Ensure all signage adheres to accessibility standards



Welcoming Skaters and Introductions

- Only use gender neutral language:
 - Refer to the individual by their name, or as '*the skater*' or '*the athlete*'.
- Warm-Up



- Entrance to ice: "We welcome the following skaters to the ice for their X-minute warm-up."
 - End of warm-up: "Skaters, your warm-up time has concluded, please exit the ice."
- Skater introduction
 - Entrance to ice: "Representing XX, please welcome [name]."
Exit: "Thank you, XX (skater name)"
- Skate Canada clothing requirements are gender neutral and there are no restrictions on what a skater chooses to wear (i.e. skirts, dresses, pants, or tights), as long as clothing is appropriate for athletic performance, and adheres to requirements for particular event categories (i.e. artistic versus showcase costume guidelines)

Kiss and Cry Area

The Kiss and Cry area is a tradition in figure skating that started decades ago and is the place where skaters and coaches wait for the scores after a performance. For less experienced skaters it can be a challenging situation as they may still be developing the emotional regulation skills required to manage positive and negative emotions in front of spectators or a camera. With televised and livestream events, the Kiss and Cry area exposes skaters of all stages of development in a more public way than ever before. While the Kiss and Cry used to be a private environment for the coach and skater to reflect on a performance, televised and livestreamed events increases the public exposure, and it is important for both skaters and coaches to be aware of their emotional and physical demeanours, and to be supported in their development.

What can event organizers do:

- Clearly indicate the location and positioning of the camera to skaters and coaches so they are aware of how they appear on camera.
- Provide signage to inform skaters and coaches if the area is mic'ed and when mics will be on
- Allow skaters and coaches the opportunity to practice in the Kiss & Cry so they are more comfortable during competition. This can be done before or after official or unofficial practices.

For more information, please refer to [Competition Planning | Long Term Development](#).

Rooming

- Give individuals a confidential opportunity and process to identify their preferred roommate(s).
- Provide a confidential process for individuals to indicate anyone they are not comfortable sharing a room with.
- Athletes (and parents/guardians for minors) should be involved in the discussions and consulted in the arrangements.
- It is recommended that all individuals have their own bed where feasible.
- Synchronized skating teams should develop clear processes for rooming assignments and have a process for feedback on the process for ongoing improvement.

Offer Inclusive Food Choices

- Check the calendar for religious dietary restrictions that might fall on your event day.



- Offer vegan, vegetarian, nut-free, gluten-free, dairy-free, halal, kosher food and other required dietary options.
- Take note of the ages of attendees - it's no secret that different types of food appeal to different age demographics.

Other Considerations

- Consider using diverse vendors and suppliers, local businesses, and those who also support equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility.
- If you are giving out or selling t-shirts or clothing, offer both all-gender and fitted options so everyone can choose the fit they wish. Divide clothing according to 'all-gender' and 'fitted' (rather than assuming one gender prefers fitted or loose clothing).
- Be aware if your event takes place on a day of significance and consider how to acknowledge this as part of your event (i.e., National Day for Truth and Reconciliation; National Day for Action for Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people; Remembrance Day, etc.).
 - Resource: [Government of Canada Important and Commemorative Days](#)

Appendix A – Guidelines for Territorial Acknowledgements

Recommendations:

- Host commentator to introduce themselves and begin broadcast with a traditional territorial acknowledgement. Suggested statement: I am joining you today from (city), followed by acknowledgment (see below).
- A second step, for virtual traditional territorial acknowledgements, is to acknowledge the diversity of Indigenous peoples across Canada, and invite viewers to share on whose territory they are located (this can be done through the Q&A/chat function, if applicable)
- For interviews, ask interviewee prior to interview if they would like to share a territorial acknowledgment prior to questions and as part of their own initial comments (usually along the lines of "I'm glad to be joining you today from XX, where I'm located on the XX territory"). If they would like to do this but do not know the standard acknowledgment for their city, share the information below. Note: this list is partial and drawn from various cities acknowledgements.

| Section | City | Traditional Territory Acknowledgement |
|----------|------------|---|
| BC/Yukon | Whitehorse | Traditional territories of the Kwanlin Dün and Taa'an Kwächän |
| | Vancouver | unceded traditional territory of the Coast Salish peoples, including the territories of Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations |
| | Victoria | unceded Coast Salish Territory of the Lekwungen and WSÁNEĆ nations. |
| | Kelowna | Unceded territory of the Okanagan Nation |



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| Alberta/NWT /Nunavut | Edmonton | Treaty 6 Territory, a traditional meeting grounds, gathering place, and travelling route to the Cree, Saulteaux, Blackfoot, Métis, Dene, and Nakota Sioux. |
| | Calgary | Treaty 7 Territory, the traditional territories of the Blackfoot Confederacy, the Tsuut'ina First Nation, and the Stoney Nakoda. The City of Calgary is also home to the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 3 |
| | Yellowknife | Chief Drygeese Territory, traditional home of the Yellowknives Dene, as well as the traditional lands of the North Slave Métis. |
| Saskatchewan | Regina | Treaty 4 territory and the traditional territory of the Cree and Saulteaux, Assiniboine and Métis. |
| | Saskatoon | Treaty 6 territory, the traditional territory of Cree peoples, and the homeland of the Métis Nation. |
| Manitoba | Winnipeg | Treaty 1 territory, traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg, Ininiwak, Anishinewuk, Dakota Oyate, and Dene, and on the national homeland of the Red River Métis Nation |
| Ontario | Barrie | The traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois), Ojibway/Chippewa and Anishnabek. |
| | Brantford | the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishnaabeg. |
| | Guelph | the traditional territory of the Attawandaron |
| | Hamilton | the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishnaabeg |
| | Kingston | the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat and Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) peoples. |
| | London | the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Attawandaron (Neutral), and Wendat peoples. |
| | Mississauga | the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the Huron-Wendat and Wyandot Nations |
| | Niagara Region | the traditional territory of Anishinaabeg, Ojibway/Chippewa and Haudenosaunee peoples. |
| | North Bay | the traditional territory of the Nipissing First Nation Anishnabeg. |
| | Oakville | the traditional territory of the Anishnabek, Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee (Iroquois), Ojibway/Chippewa peoples. |
| | Ottawa | the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishnaabeg people. |
| | Sudbury | Robinson-Huron Treaty territory and the traditional territory of the Atikameksheng Anishnaabeg |
| | Toronto | the Ancestral Traditional Territories of many nations, including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishinabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples |



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| | Waterloo | the Haldimand Tract, traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishnaabeg, and Haudenosauonee peoples. |
| | Windsor | the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (Neutral), Anishnaabeg, and Haudenosauonee peoples. |
| Quebec | Montreal | the traditional and unceded territory of the Kanien'keha:ka (Mohawk) |
| | Quebec City | the unceded territory of the Abenaki and Wabenaki Confederacy and the Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) OR traditional unceded territory of the Huron-Wendat people. |
| New Brunswick | | the traditional unceded territory of the Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) and Mi'kmaq peoples |
| Nova Scotia | | the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People |
| PEI | | the traditional and unceded territory of the Abegweit Mi'kmaq First Nation |
| Newfoundland and Labrador | St. John's | the traditional territory of the Beothuk and Mi'kmaq peoples |