

Questions, Concerns and Answers about the Covid-19 Assessment Center

By Tracey Zwiers

Please keep in mind that these are questions and concerns that were brought forward to me (Tracey) by parents. I have done my best to find answers.

1. Who decided that the Couchiching Covid-19 Assessment Center would be located at Rotary Place?

Rotary place was chosen by the Orillia Emergency Management Team (which includes the Mayor and several Senior City Staff), other City of Orillia staff and Orillia Soldiers Memorial Hospital, in consultation with the Simcoe Muskoka Health Unit.

2. Why was Rotary Place chosen as the best location for the Couchiching Covid-19 Assessment Center?

Mayor Steve Clarke has indicated that Rotary Place is the best location for the Couchiching Covid-19 Center because:

- it allows for ample parking in a designated area
- it allows for a complete separation of the assessment center from the rest of the building
- it allows for a separate entrance and exit that does not affect regular programming
- a large arena floor that provides indoor services for Covid-19 testing by appointment only throughout the winter months.

3. Orillia has several empty buildings, and therefore why weren't these empty buildings considered viable for the Couchiching Covid-19 Assessment Centre?

Mayor Steve Clarke has indicated that other locations were investigated and due to several issues listed below, they were deemed unusable by Orillia Soldiers Memorial Hospital, Couchiching Covid-19 Assessment Center staff and the Simcoe Muskoka Health unit. These issues include:

- availability – immediate access was needed
- parking availability
- proximity to public transit
- traffic flow
- food preparation on site (Barnsfield Point)
- operational requirements needed by the assessment centre

4. What are the "strict protocols" that have been put in place?

The following is a list of protocols that I (Tracey) was given by the City of Orillia.

- separate entrance and exit for the Assessment center on opposite sides of the building
- enhanced cleaning will take place at Rotary Place by city staff
- Orillia Soldiers' Memorial Hospital is responsible for thorough cleaning of the assessment centre at 8:00pm each night
- Airflow in Rotary Place was assessed and found to be more than what is required
- All waste related to the assessment centre will be removed from the site. nothing will be stored at Rotary Place.
- Orillia Soldiers' Memorial Hospital staff will be in the parking lot to ensure there is no confusion as to what entrance should be used.
- Each User group has protocols in place to ensure Covid-19 prevention measures are adhered to
- Everyone is required to sanitize their hands, put on a mask at all entry points of the building and maintain physical distance
- Covid-19 screening will continue to take place at regular programming entry points of the building.

5. What does “enhanced cleaning” at Rotary Place mean?

Dressing Rooms

- are cleaned and sanitized with a Covid-19 disinfectant spray that air dries after each rental
- the dressing room must sit empty for 3 hours before it can be used again
- OFSC is hoping to start using dressing rooms at both arenas in November

Bathrooms

- are cleaned every 2 hours including Dressing Room 9 that we use

Spectator area

- all railings and doors are cleaned every 2 hours

Touchpoints

- all entrance/exit ways, railings, door frames are cleaned every 2 hours

6. What is the assessment process for airflow and ventilation at Rotary?

Rotary Place uses a “Closed Loop Ventilation System”. This allows for each arena to have their own heating and cooling system. This system is inspected regularly through the health unit. The Covid-19 virus spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Everyone in the lobby should have a mask on, therefore there should be little to no droplets in the air. Any droplets in the air will not spread further than 6 feet. If the people going for Covid-19 testing produces droplets, their droplets (which should stay in their mask) will not come close to our skaters since we are more than 6 feet from Covid-19 assessment entrance.

There have been some concerns regarding Legionnaires that was found at the arena last year. Legionnaires is a bacterium that can grow on the cooling tower, and can become airborne in the arena by being blown through the condenser located on the roof of the building. Maintenance and inspections are done regularly on all systems. Truthfully, due to the Legionnaires outbreak last year, the ventilation and cleaning are probably better than they have been in the past 10 years at BOTH arenas.

7. Concerns regarding traffic control and parking.

City staff are on site to direct traffic for the Covid-19 Assessment Centre to the parking lot closest to University Ave. Many of you have seen the barrier set up. Unfortunately, if you stay on the main driveway, or come in the back driveway no one is directing people to park in the “Covid-19 parking” area. Concerns with this have been expressed to the city, and they said they would investigate it.

***Suggestions would be:

- Park in the last parking lot by the soccer/tennis courts. This would allow for our skating families to stay together and have less/no contact with anyone parking in the main parking lot by mistake.
- ask your child to NOT use the benches outside the doors of Rotary (the less contact with things, the better).

8. Can we enter the arena at the side (where we exit) and then exit at the far end past the tennis courts?

The club has asked the city and they have said NO because they want everyone entering and exiting the building at the same location. The club will continue to follow up on this.

9. Why are other user groups using Rotary Place?

As of October 5th, the city has allowed other user groups to rent ice, and rent room space at Rotary arena. As of October 1st, the province allows 50 people per rentable space or less depending on the size of the rental area. I am told that each space has a maximum capacity:

- Green Arena – 25 at ice level and 25 for spectator viewing = 50 people max
- Tournament Room – 20 max

-Orillia Room – 38 max

Currently, the City of Orillia is only allowing City of Orillia programming in the Tournament Room and Orillia Room.

-Mondays – PreSchool Dance (Tournament Room)

-Mondays – Adult Dancing (Orillia Room)

-Tuesday - Karate/Taekwondo (Tournament Room)

-Tuesdays - Adult Dancing (Orillia Room)

-Thursday - Karate/Taekwondo (Tournament Room)

All instructors have had Covid-19 Training and must complete the City of Orillia waiver each time they enter facility. Currently numbers are extremely low in all these programs.

10. If 25 skaters are allowed on the ice, why do we have smaller numbers on the ice?

Along with the City of Orillia rules, we as a club must also adhere to Skate Canada and Skate Ontario Covid-19 guidelines for keeping our skaters safe. These guidelines have changed over the past few months regarding numbers:

-May 26th – max 5 people in total – must have 1 coach on the ice

-June 12th -max 10 people in total – must have 1 coach on the ice

-June 29th - max 10 people in total – must have 1 coach on the ice (same as above)

-July 17th – max 15 skaters + 5 coaches = max 20

-July 30th - max 15 skaters + 5 coaches = max 20 (same as above)

-August 17th - max 15 skaters + 5 coaches = max 20 (same as above)

-September 24th – max 20 people on the ice - must have 1 coach on the ice

-October 2nd - max 25 people on the ice - must have 1 coach on the ice

Since skating started on September 10th, we needed to organize our session according to the guidelines at that time, which was maximum 15 skaters on the ice.

11. Why are parents not allowed into the arena for figure skating, and hockey is allowing parents in?

As a club, our board wanted to get our skaters back on the ice in a timely manner, following all city guidelines, following all Skate Canada and Skate Ontario guidelines and provide screening to keep everyone safe. This is a huge undertaking for a volunteer board. We cannot do everything all at once. Our goal was to get our StarSkaters back on the ice in Orillia. Next step is to get CanSkate on the ice, and we still need to get dressing rooms organized and YES we want to allow the parents in. It is a learning process, and we need to take, understand and implement all the factors that are needed to keep everyone safe during this pandemic.

12. Is it possible to skate at Brian Orser and not at Rotary Place? Could we switch ice time with hockey?

We have reached out to Orillia Minor hockey to see if there are any options of switching ice. They have no plans to meet until next week sometime to have any further discussion on this, but its highly unlikely. Unfortunately, they do not have ice at Brian Orser each night when we are at Rotary. Some nights they start at 6:30pm and run until 10:30pm – they do not have any 4:00pm ice time slots at Brian Orser. We canl also follow up with the city to see who skates at Brian Orser each night at 4:00pm.

The best thing you and your child can do is to wear a mask. Each health worker/doctor I talked to this week have told me this numerous times. Line up outside with your mask on, enter the building, hand in your waiver, walk straight out to the ice surface and onto the ice before removing your mask. Some may wish to wear their mask while skating, and we have several that do this. This is OK, and quite acceptable.