

Line Change/Fast Face-off Procedure

At every stoppage of play the referee is required to do the **Line Change Procedure**. This procedure was developed to give the home team the advantage of substituting their players last so that if they wish they can match lines with the visiting team. Usually this means putting out the home teams 'checking line' against the visitors 'scoring line'.

Once the whistle has been blown and any pushing and shoving has stopped the referee will skate out to a spot on the ice where he has a clear view of the benches and begin to count 5 seconds in his head. During this 5-second period the visiting team must make any player substitutions they wish to make. Once the referee has counted the 5 seconds he will raise one of his hands in the air as a stop signal and look towards the home bench. This indicates that the visiting team can no longer change players. He now counts 5 seconds in his head a second time. This is the amount of time that the home team now has to change players. Once the referee has counted this 5-second he lowers his hand. This indicates that the home team can no longer change players. The home team can change players at any time during this procedure but all changes must be completed once the referee's hand is lowered.

Rule 19(g)

If either team tries to change players after their allotted 5 seconds the referee will send those players back to the bench and by doing so, this is the warning to the coach that if it happens again the team will be assessed a bench minor penalty. Each team is entitled to a warning before being assessed a bench minor penalty. **Rule 19(g) Situation 9**

In 2002-03 a new **Fast Face-off Procedure** was implemented to help speed up the game. After the referee has lowered his hand the linesman blows his whistle and starts to count 5 seconds in his head. He now has up to 5 seconds to drop the puck. This means that all players must be in place and the two centre men lined up correctly before he blows his whistle. If a centre man is not ready in place or another player is in an offside position, encroachment, after the linesman counts 5 seconds in his head, he will 'throw' the centre out of the face-off circle. **Rule 57(a) Situation 21**. He will then blow his whistle and count 5 seconds a second time. If the same team commits a second face-off violation the referee will assess the team a delay of game penalty. **Rule 57(d)**

In a two official system the referee conducting the face-off will perform the line change and fast face-off procedure.

First 5 seconds – visiting team and home team can make player changes

Second 5 seconds – referee puts his hand in the air and home team only can make changes

After second 5 seconds – referee lowers his hand and no more changes can be made