Curling Etiquette

World Curling baseline: 1 September 2026 | Checked 8 October 2026

Care for the ice. Care for the people.

Small habits make club curling safer, fairer and more welcoming. Some habits are courtesy; others are formal rules. The labels in this guide tell them apart.



Clean footwear is everyone’s job

Club practice: Change into clean indoor shoes or curling shoes. Remove grit from soles and grippers before stepping onto the ice. Check brush heads and clothing for loose fibers. Follow the club’s rules for drinks and food.

Protect the playing surface

Formal rule: Do not damage the ice with equipment or handprints or body prints (R11(a)). Keep warm hands and knees off the ice except as needed to get up safely. Report damage to the instructor or ice crew. Never sacrifice safety to protect the ice.

Arrive ready to play

Courtesy: Arrive early enough to change, warm up and hear announcements. Tell your team promptly if you cannot make it. **Formal rule:** Be ready for your turn and do not take unreasonable time (R5(h)).

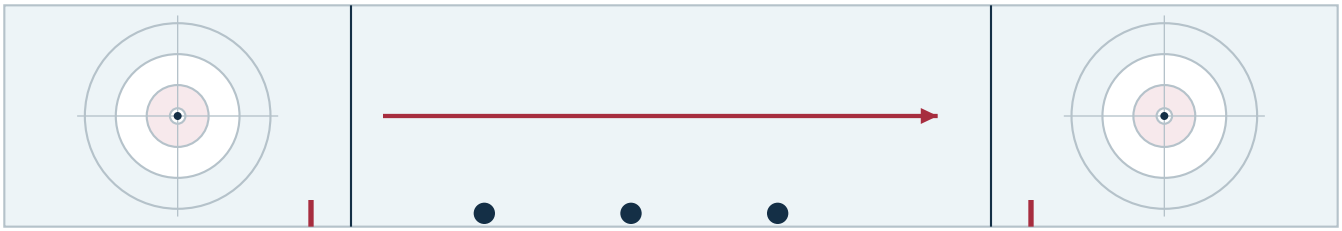
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References: Spirit of Curling; R4(a), R5(h), R11(a)-(b)

Give the shot room

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When the other team delivers, choose a permitted place to wait. Stay still, keep conversation quiet and leave the player’s sightline clear.



Wait along a side, between the courtesy lines.

Schematic. The marked waiting strip is not a walking lane during delivery.

Where non-delivering players wait

Formal rule: During delivery, wait stationary along the side lines between the courtesy lines. Up to two teammates may wait behind the playing-end back line without interfering with the delivering skip or vice. The next thrower may wait to the side, behind the delivery-end hack (R4(a)).

Move at the right time

Courtesy and safety: Walk at the side when clear. Look before crossing, and never cross in front of a delivery or a moving stone. Avoid stepping over stones or hacks. After sweeping, get safely out of the way before returning.

Keep the game moving without rushing people

Check your stone and equipment before your turn. Keep strategy conversations focused. Give beginners time to learn and players time to use delivery aids safely. Ask the instructor for help if the pace is falling behind.

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Play honestly and respectfully

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Play to win fairly. Respect belongs to both teams, whether the shot succeeds or misses.

1 Say what happened

If you touch a moving stone, move a resting stone or notice another mistake, tell both teams promptly. Describe the facts. The correct remedy depends on the incident; ask an official or consult the rulebook.

2 Agree before clearing

Keep the house undisturbed until the skips or vice-skips agree on the score. If a measure is needed, give the person measuring space. Do not sweep stones away while a possible point is still being discussed.

3 Disagree without making it personal

Ask which rule applies, listen and seek the league’s designated official or organizer. Do not invent a penalty, argue over someone’s character or pressure a newcomer to accept your interpretation.

4 Encourage the people around you

Recognize a good shot from either team. Do not celebrate an opponent’s mistake or distract a player. Offer advice when it is welcome; give teammates specific, supportive feedback.

Formal rules and sportsmanship: Player interference, abusive behavior, equipment misuse and deliberate rule-breaking are more than etiquette issues. In organized play, involve the appropriate official or club leader.

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Make room for every curler

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Ask before helping

Club practice: Ask what assistance a player wants. Do not grab a wheelchair, delivery stick, stabilizer or another person without permission. Keep routes and access points clear. Let the club instructor explain safe positioning and any adapted procedures.

Different formats have different rules

Wheelchair curling has no sweeping. Recreational stick delivery and other adaptations need the club's approved procedures; they should not be judged by an assumed slide-delivery rule. Confirm the format before playing (R11(e), R14-R15).

Friendly does not mean compulsory

Offer a greeting and a "good curling" in a way that is comfortable for both people. A wave can replace a handshake. Postgame socializing is an invitation. Nobody owes a drink, alcohol, physical contact or a reason to leave.

Leave the sheet ready for the next group

Agree on the score, then clear stones carefully as your club instructs. Warn anyone in their path. Return equipment and report damaged gear. Thank the other team and the people caring for the ice.

Sources and scope

HouseCall is an independent learning resource, not a governing-body publication or endorsement. The event rulebook and the official ruling control. Local leagues may adopt different procedures.

Primary rules: World Curling, *The Rules of Curling and Rules of Competition*, 1 September 2026 edition, checked 8 October 2026. Open the official rulebook | Current rules page

USA Curling: etiquette and beginner guidance

Curling Canada: safety guidance (safety context, not the rules baseline)

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