



## PERSONAL PROTECTIVE **HOCKEY** EQUIPMENT

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# COVID19

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# OVERVIEW

Bauer Hockey is the world's leading manufacturer of hockey equipment, founded in Kitchener, Ont. in 1927. The company was the first to attach a blade to a boot, effectively creating the modern hockey skate. Bauer has since expanded to producing all categories of hockey equipment as well as lacrosse equipment through its sister company, Cascade Lacrosse. The company's headquarters are located in Exeter, New Hampshire, with its research and development centre in Blainville, Quebec. Cascade Lacrosse has a production facility in Liverpool, New York.

On March 2, 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO) warned that there was a worldwide shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE). Following the mandatory closure of all non-essential businesses, Bauer made the decision to transition from producing hockey equipment to the production of medical-grade masks for frontline healthcare workers.

The following case study outlines Bauer's decisions, government response and the public's response to its face shield initiative.

## Website and Social Media Accounts



[bauer.com](https://bauer.com)



[@bauerhockey](https://www.instagram.com/bauerhockey)



[@BauerHockey](https://twitter.com/BauerHockey)



[@BauerHockey](https://www.facebook.com/BauerHockey)

# Key dates

**Jan 13, 2020**

First case of novel coronavirus outside of China confirmed



**March 11**

NBA player Rudy Gobert tests positive for COVID-19 and NBA cancels 2019-20 season.



**March 13**

Quebec Premier François Legault declares a state of emergency in the province. New York Governor Andrew Cuomo declares a state of emergency in the state



**March 21**

Canada and the United States close the land border to non-essential travel



**March 25**

Bauer gets approval from Quebec government to reopen its production facilities to manufacture medical-grade face shields



**March 3**

WHO warns of worldwide shortage of personal protective equipment



**March 12**

NHL announces the decision to pause the 2019-20 season



**March 20**

All non-essential businesses in the state of the New York forced to close due to government legislation



**March 23**

All non-essential businesses in the province of Quebec forced to close due to government legislation



**April 1**

Bauer begins production of medical-grade face shields



## The WHO warns of worldwide PPE shortage

On March 3, 2020, the WHO warned that there would be a severe disruption to the supply of PPE worldwide, caused by an increase in demand, panic buying and misuse. This put the lives of healthcare workers at risk, leaving them ill-equipped to provide care safely to COVID-19 patients.

Personal protective equipment includes:

- Medical masks
- Respirators
- Goggles
- Face shields
- Gowns
- Aprons

It was estimated that 89 million medical masks would be required for the COVID-19 pandemic each month. This demand meant that manufacturing had to increase by 40 per cent to meet the global demand. To help meet that demand, the WHO called on companies in the industry and governments.

The March 3, 2020 news release from the WHO can be found [here](#).

## NHL announces shutdown due to COVID-19

On March 12, 2020, the NHL made the decision to pause the 2019-20 season, following the news that an NBA player had tested positive for COVID-19.

In a statement made by NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman, he said, “[...] Given that our leagues share so many facilities and locker rooms and it now seems likely that some member of the NHL community would test positive at some point - it is no longer appropriate to try to continue to play games at this time.”

The NHL Players’ Association (NHLPA) was quick to agree with the decision, stating that it would continue to “closely monitor this very dynamic situation”. The full article published by the NHL can be found [here](#).

## Bauer changes direction after non-essential businesses are forced to close

On March 20, 2020, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo announced the mandatory closure of all non-essential businesses across the state. Three days following this announcement Ontario Premier Doug Ford enacted the same legislation.

Both statements can be found here:

[New York Governor Andrew Cuomo](#)

[Ontario Premier Doug Ford](#)

With production facilities in New York and Quebec, Bauer was forced to shut down the manufacturing of hockey equipment.

As mentioned in a [National Post interview](#), Dan Bourgeois, vice president of product innovation, Bauer, said that he heard from a colleague in New York that there was an urge for the private sector to assist with the PPE shortage. Bourgeois said that he already started brainstorming ideas with his team via video conference, knowing that Bauer needed to help in some way.

After some deliberating, Bauer decided to repurpose its hockey visor to make medical-grade face shields for frontline healthcare workers. It took the Bauer team four prototypes before they landed on one which was tested by a physician (the father of one of the team members) before being finalized. The face shields were to be worn in conjunction with face masks and eye protection.

In an interview with [COVID19Communications.ca](#), a Bauer spokesperson said,

***“As the world’s leading hockey manufacturer, we remain committed to protecting hockey players in any way that we can. It was a natural transition to extend that protection to their families, communities and the cities they live in.”***

# Governments authorize Bauer to re-open production facilities

Before reopening its production facilities, Bauer had to apply for authorization to be considered an essential service by both the New York and Ontario governments. The project was approved in the early hours of March 25, 2020 and the company immediately began preparing for operations. It was on this day that Bauer announced to the public its new initiative (*Figure 1.1*).

Bauer had to re-invent its production facilities, which usually followed a conveyor belt model, to each employee having an individual workstation, as per social distancing regulations. The employee counts at both of Bauer's facilities dropped significantly. Instead of the standard 50-80 employees, the facilities were down to 15-20 at each location. Employees also received additional training and safety checks before the start of production.



**FIGURE 1.1**

Original announcement regarding face shield production made by Bauer on March 25, 2020

## Bauer refuses to let orders go unfilled in a bold public move

To get the word out, Bauer contacted the Quebec government to explain the initiative and that the company was accepting orders. When Bauer did not get a response the company contacted the Réseau des Sports (RDS), a division of The Sports Network (TSN), to spread the word. A full copy of the RDS article, published on March 24, 2020, can be found [here](#).



Bauer's face shields were priced at \$6 CAD each (approximately \$4 USD), a break-even price point for the company. Any profits that were made from the masks were to be donated to charity. Bauer was also clear that the masks would be sold on a first-come, first-serve basis. At this point, orders were coming in from federal, provincial and municipal governments, healthcare facilities and civilians, an example of which can be seen in *Figure 1.2*.

### FIGURE 1.2

Bauer's response on Twitter to a news alert from CBC stating that Canadian government had placed an order for face shields

The overwhelming amount of orders prompted Bauer to release its design plans publicly; in hopes it would inspire other businesses to get involved and meet the demand. Bauer ensured the design plan was easily available, popping up immediately upon visiting its website, along with a note from the company (*Figure 1.3*). The note is concluded with #ProtectOurHealthcareHeroes and #OneTeam, encouraging website visitors to get involved in the conversation on social media. A copy of the face shield design plan can be found in Appendix A.

# BAUER

Image source: Bauer Hockey



## BAUER MEDICAL FACE SHIELD

DOING OUR PART TO PROTECT THE MOST VULNERABLE

Dear Valued Customer,

As a company, we've shifted resources to expedite the distribution of crucial face shields directly to healthcare facilities, first responders and government agencies in support of those who are putting their lives on the line daily for the rest of us. With sports currently on hold, we're working hard to protect those working for a brighter tomorrow.

We're proud to say we've delivered tens of thousands of units in just two weeks, with a plan for 2.25 million through the end of May. Though we've greatly expanded our capacities to safeguard as many as possible, we've maximized the number of orders we can fulfill, which is why we published our manufacturing instructions online.

While we're humbled to be able to help, we're indebted to those risking their own health and safety during this trying time. We will never be able to repay you for your work, especially right now, but we'd like to start with Thank You. #ProtectOurHealthcareHeroes #OneTeam

DOWNLOAD FACE SHIELD PLANS

### FIGURE 1.3

Statement that Bauer released on its homepage to make the plans available publicly

In an interview with [COVID19Communications.ca](https://covid19communications.ca), a Bauer spokesperson said,

***"Within 48 hours, Bauer received orders for about a million units which made publicly sharing our design and materials a no brainer. We took to the media to urge other businesses to get onboard to accommodate the high-demand and support our frontline workers."***

Bauer heard from dozens of companies wanting to help shortly following the release of the design plans. One of the companies eager to start manufacturing was *Sparx Hockey*, which Bauer shared on its Facebook page as seen in *Figure 1.4*.

As of this research, there has been no set date for the NHL to resume the hockey season.



### FIGURE 1.4

Bauer's response on its Facebook page to Sparx Hockey joining in face shield production

## Face-shield initiative sparks public response

The public was quick to respond on social media to Bauer's announcement. Examples of some of the public response to Bauer's face shield initiative can be found in *Figure 1.5*.



**FIGURE 1.5**

Response on social media to the original announcement made by Bauer on March 25, 2020.

Bauer is an example of a company that quickly shifted direction in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The company repurposed its materials and workflow in order to assist the public, an act that will not be forgotten. With the decision to make its plans public, Bauer showed that true corporate social responsibility is not about profits or building up your brand, it's about supporting your community by any means necessary.

# Appendix A

The face shield plan made available publicly by Bauer.

