

# COVID-19 Specialized Worker Protocol

Under the Authority of the Chief Medical Officer of Health

Last Revised October 4th, 2021

## 1.0 Introduction

The goal of COVID-19 Specialized Worker Protocol is to, as much as possible, prevent the introduction of the virus into the province and prevent transmission within the province while allowing Nova Scotian businesses to access the essential skills and technical capacity they need to continue operations. To do this, government considers applications for exceptions for some out-of-province specialized workers to travel to Nova Scotia as a requirement of their work.

All Specialized Workers must follow the Public Health Order issued by the Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH), dated March 24, 2020, and any direction arising from that Order and directives given under the authority of the Health Protection Act (HPA).

This document provides direction to specialized workers for the prevention and control of novel coronavirus (COVID-19). This protocol is based on the latest available scientific evidence about this emerging disease and may change as new information becomes available. The Public Health Agency of Canada will be posting regular updates and related documents at [phac-aspc.gc.ca](https://phac-aspc.gc.ca).

## 2.0 Definitions

This protocol uses the term specialized workers to include workers who are required to complete urgent and critical work in Nova Scotia that requires specialized skills unavailable within this province. This protocol only applies to specialized workers who are not fully vaccinated and who come from within Canada (but outside Atlantic Canada) to work in Nova Scotia.

International specialized workers must follow [federal requirements](#). They do not follow this protocol.

At this time, specialized workers can apply to enter Nova Scotia for three categories of work:

- Work on critical infrastructure that is crucial to the functioning of the province. A list of critical infrastructure included in this definition is available at: [publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/ntnl-scrt/crtcl-nfrstrctr/esf-sfe-en.aspx](https://publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/ntnl-scrt/crtcl-nfrstrctr/esf-sfe-en.aspx)
- Work that is necessary to preserve the viability of one or more Nova Scotia businesses. Applicants will be required to provide information that demonstrates significant impacts to one or more Nova Scotia businesses.
- Skilled workers required to enter Nova Scotia to carry out fish harvesting and its required associated activities, which are conducted either on land or via fishing vessel. For the purposes of this definition, fish harvesting is the commercial or licensed activity of catching fish and other seafood for market or other approved activities. It does not include recreational fishery. For example, fish harvesters would include people who are engaged in the act of fish harvesting and people who are essential to the preparation, maintenance, and repair of required fishing infrastructure to support imminent or ongoing fish harvesting activities.

Workers from another province or territory outside Atlantic Canada who have no COVID-19 symptoms and who have been fully vaccinated (ie both doses of a 2-dose series of vaccine approved by the World Health Organization) at least 14 days before arriving in Nova Scotia can enter the province as regular travelers by completing the [Nova Scotia Safe Check-in](#). They do not follow this protocol. There is no mandatory isolation or testing for regular travelers who are fully vaccinated, although regular testing continues to be recommended.

Workers from other Atlantic provinces who have no COVID-19 symptoms can follow the [Atlantic Canada travel protocol](#). They do not follow this specialized worker protocol.

This protocol uses the term “place of residence” to refer to the location where specialized workers reside during their time in Nova Scotia. A place of residence can be a hotel or vacation rental (house, apartment, cabin, etc.) that allows for isolation as per the requirements below. In the case of fish harvesters, it can be their fishing vessel.

### 3.0 Application process

Prior to each trip, specialized workers who are not fully vaccinated must apply to enter the province by completing the Nova Scotia [Safe Check-in form](#). Approval is automatic. They must be prepared to show their approval email to border officials, along with documentation proving they are entering the province for work as specialized workers and proof of vaccination, if applicable.

If more than 10 specialized workers from one business are coming within a one-month period, the business is also required to provide details of their workplace COVID-19 prevention plan to [NSEconomy@novascotia.ca](mailto:NSEconomy@novascotia.ca) prior to travel.

### 4.0 Isolation Requirements

Specialized workers must isolate when they are not working for at least seven days. They must get two negative tests results in order to stop isolation after seven days. They must complete the full seven days, regardless of when they receive their test results. If they do not have their second negative test result after seven days, they must continue isolating when they are not working until they get it.

Fish harvesters may self-isolate onboard a vessel if all other occupants of the vessel also follow this Protocol for Specialized Workers. Everyone onboard must remain in isolation (except while working) until the last crew member who arrived onboard completes the self-isolation period.

Testing must be done in Nova Scotia, not in advance of arrival. It must be a standard PCR lab test, not a rapid test. See more information about getting a test in Nova Scotia in Section 5 of this protocol.

Starting on their second day in the province, each specialized worker will receive daily check-in emails to which they must respond. Once a person has met their isolation obligations, they can unsubscribe from the daily check-in email via the unsubscribe link in the email. If fish harvesters are at sea without internet access and therefore not able to respond, they can unsubscribe from the daily check-in emails but must still meet their isolation obligations.

During their isolation period, specialized workers are allowed to do the following activities:

- drive to and from their place of residence and their worksite/job location
- drive to and from the airport or border crossing and their place of residence
- work at a worksite while following all precautions set out in this document and any plan in place for the worksite

They must:

- self-isolate when they are not at work or while travelling to and from the workplace
- leave their accommodations only to travel to the work site, having meals delivered or using curbside pickup.
- Have all required necessary supplies delivered to the workplace and/or accommodations. Fish harvesters may need to have fishing supplies and fuel for fish harvesting delivered to their vessel.
- travel as directly as possible to the work site. No other trips into the community are permitted (no shopping, visiting, or tourism activities).
- wear non-medical masks and/or PPE required for their work and maintain physical distancing while working (2 meters away from others) as much as is feasible. They must always wear a non-medical mask in public spaces where they are working.
- Conduct routine cleaning and sanitization of shared spaces onboard vessels for fish harvesters.
- monitor their symptoms closely, and if they start to feel sick, self-isolate and complete [the COVID-19 self-assessment](#) to book a test. Even if you only have one mild symptom, you need to get tested.

## 5.0 Testing

### 5.1 Testing when you do not have symptoms

Specialized workers who have no symptoms are required to get tested on day 1 or 2 in Nova Scotia. If they are still in the province, they must get tested again on day 6 or 7 and on day 12, 13 or 14. This testing is mandatory, for all specialized workers except fish harvesters. There is no cost to specialized workers.

If they are allowed to stop isolating, they are not required to do the third test.

This testing schedule is recommended for fish harvesters instead of mandatory because we recognize that their work schedule, especially those who work at sea, may not fit with this testing schedule. However, if fish harvesters want to stop isolating after 7 days, they must have negative results from tests done on day 1 or 2 and on day 6 or 7.

A negative test result does not give 100% certainty that a specialized worker does not have COVID-19. However, testing is an added layer of protection because a negative test result is a good indication that a specialized worker is not likely carrying and transmitting the virus unknowingly.

Testing must be done in Nova Scotia, not in advance of arrival. It must be a standard PCR lab test which takes up to 72 hours to be processed in Nova Scotia. It cannot be a rapid test which gives a result in minutes.

## 5.2 Testing when you have symptoms

Anyone who has symptoms of COVID-19 must complete the online assessment, book a [COVID-19 test](#), and follow the isolation directions provided. Even if you only have one mild symptom, you need to get tested. If you can't book the test online, you can call 811.

## 5.3 Booking a test

Specialized workers can get a standard PCR lab test if they arrive by air at the Halifax Stanfield International Airport. They can also book COVID-19 tests at testing sites around the province by completing the [COVID-19 self-assessment](#) to book their tests. Follow the directions that the assessment gives. Do not call 811 to book a test unless you cannot access the online self-assessment.

Specialized workers can leave their work site or their accommodation just to get tested. They should wear a non-medical mask when going between their vehicle and the testing site and stay 2 metres/6 feet apart from others. They should not take a bus or shuttle. Using their own transportation is strongly recommended. However, they can take a taxi, wearing a non-medical mask, if there is no other alternative.

## 6.0 Resources

811: [811.novascotia.ca](https://811.novascotia.ca) to complete a self-assessment for COVID-19

Nova Scotia Coronavirus webpage: [novascotia.ca/coronavirus](https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus)

Nova Scotia Safe Check-in: [travel-declaration.novascotia.ca/en](https://travel-declaration.novascotia.ca/en)

Government of Canada: [canada.ca/coronavirus](https://canada.ca/coronavirus)

Government of Canada information line: 1-833-784-4397 (toll-free)

NSHA Public Health Offices: [nshealth.ca/public-health-offices](https://nshealth.ca/public-health-offices)

Guidance for the use of Non-Medical Masks:

[novascotia.ca/coronavirus/masks](https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/masks)

Handwashing poster: [novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/Hand-Washing-Poster.pdf](https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/Hand-Washing-Poster.pdf)