

COVID-19 Protocol for Exempt Travelers

Under the authority of the Chief Medical Officer of Health

1.0 Introduction

Nova Scotia's [Public Health Order](#) is issued by the Chief Medical Officer of Health under the authority of the *Health Protection Act*. Under the Public Health Order, people who enter from outside Atlantic Canada must [self-isolate for 14 days](#) upon arrival in Nova Scotia unless they have an exemption.

[Exemptions from this requirement](#) in the Public Health Order are for people in certain jobs and situations who are not fully vaccinated at least 14 days before arriving, as long as they do not have symptoms of COVID-19. While they are exempt from 14 days of self-isolation, people with exemptions must still meet certain requirements outlined in this travel protocol (effective April 7, 2021) to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The requirements in Section 3 of this travel protocol apply to people in the following jobs and situations who are exempt from 14 days of self-isolation when they arrive from outside Nova Scotia for a specific purpose as outlined in the Public Health Order:

- People engaged in a legal proceeding in Nova Scotia
- People traveling for essential health services and their accompanying support people
- Certain workers who must enter Nova Scotia to carry out their work duties or training required for their jobs:
 - workers in the trade and transportation sector who are employed in the movement of goods and people across the Nova Scotia border by land, air, or water, including truck drivers, crew, maintenance and operational workers on any plane, train or ship
 - Canadian Military and Defence Team personnel, Coast Guard, RCMP, Canadian Border Services Agency, and Canadian Security Intelligence Service
 - first responders, including police, fire and EHS paramedic workers

In addition to the requirements outlined in Section 3 of this protocol, everyone must also follow all the [public health measures](#) in place in Nova Scotia.

NOTE: If any of these people are traveling for personal reasons (such as vacation or visiting), they are not exempt. They are considered regular travelers and must follow isolation requirements based on vaccination and testing. There are different requirements for [domestic and international travel](#).

2.0 Exemptions not covered by this travel protocol

2.1 Child custody exemption and protocol

The Public Health Order includes an exemption related to travel for the purpose of carrying out child custody agreements. They are not covered by this travel protocol. They follow the [COVID-19 Protocol for Child Custody Travel](#).

2.3 Non-exempt workers

There is specific self-isolation direction for other types of workers when they are in Nova Scotia. **None of the following workers are covered by this travel protocol:**

- Rotational workers (as defined in the [rotational worker directive](#)) may need to follow a modified form of self-isolation for up to 14 days when they return to Nova Scotia, depending on vaccination status and testing. Their isolation and testing requirements are outlined in the rotational worker directive and include applying to enter the province via the [Nova Scotia Safe Check-in form](#).
- Specialized workers (as defined in the [specialized worker directive](#)) have different isolation requirements depending on the nature of their work and vaccination status and testing. Their isolation and testing requirements are outlined in the specialized worker protocol and include applying to enter the province via the [Nova Scotia Safe Check-in form](#).
- Unless they were fully vaccinated 14 days before arriving with a vaccine approved for use in Canada, temporary foreign workers must self-isolate for 14 days upon arrival in Canada and get tested under the federal Quarantine Act. They are allowed to complete this isolation and testing in Nova Scotia. Isolation plans for these workers have been developed by Nova Scotia employers. These workers must follow the [COVID-19 Protocol for Temporary Foreign Workers](#).

3.0 Requirements for exempted travelers covered by this protocol

3.1 Nova Scotia Safe Check-in

When traveling for an exempted activity outlined in the Public Health Order, everyone with the exemptions listed in Section 1.0 above must apply to enter from outside Nova Scotia by completing the [Nova Scotia Safe Check-in](#) form. Once they complete the form, they will receive an automatic approval via email which they must show to border officials when they enter the province, along with documentation proving that they are entering for an exempted activity.

NOTE: In order to not impede commercial operations, professional truck drivers are not required to complete the Nova Scotia Safe Check-in form. Instead, their employers in Nova Scotia are sharing information with provincial government that would normally be captured in the form.

3.2 Symptoms of COVID-19

Do not enter Nova Scotia if you have [symptoms of COVID-19](#). If you have symptoms, stay where you are and follow the process in place in that jurisdiction and arrange assessment.

Anyone who becomes unwell after arriving in Nova Scotia 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.

People who have one mild symptom, other than fever or new or worsening cough, do not have to isolate while waiting for their test and results.

3.3 Legal proceeding

People engaged in a legal proceeding in Nova Scotia (accused, victim, witness, plaintiff, defendant or lawyer) can enter Nova Scotia to participate in the proceeding. They must self-isolate at all times when they are not in court and maintain 2 metres/6 feet physical distance from others. Further, they need to follow the public health measures outlined in section 4 below.

NOTE: This travel protocol does not apply to people who leave Nova Scotia for a legal proceeding. They are not exempt. They must complete 14 days of self-isolation when they return to Nova Scotia.

3.4 Essential health services

People can enter Nova Scotia to access essential health services. Whether a health service is considered essential is determined by the patient's health care provider. These people need to follow the public health measures outlined in section 4 below.

The patient may be accompanied by one or more support people. You should check with the Nova Scotia Health Authority or the IWK Health Centre about their policies for the number of support people allowed. The support people need to follow the public health measures outlined in Section 4 below.

People can also leave Nova Scotia for this purpose without having to self-isolate for 14 days when they return. They need to follow the public health measures outlined in section 4 below.

3.5 Workers involved in movement of goods and people

People can enter Nova Scotia when their trip is work related and involves the movement of goods and people across the Nova Scotia border by land, air, or water. They can also leave Nova Scotia for this purpose and return without having to self-isolate for 14 days. This includes truck drivers and crew, maintenance and operational workers on any plane, train, or ship. When traveling as part of their jobs, these workers need to follow the public health measures outlined in section 4 below.

NOTE: People are not exempt if they live in Nova Scotia but they commute for their work transporting goods or people in another jurisdiction (i.e., they do not transport them into and out of Nova Scotia) or they commute for their work maintaining planes, trains and ships in another jurisdiction. If their schedule fits the criteria of a [rotational worker](#), they have a modified form of self-isolation. If not and they are traveling from within Canada, they are considered regular travelers with isolation based on their vaccination status and testing. If they are international travelers, they must follow the [federal requirements for international travelers](#).

NOTE: Deadheading is a common practice in the airline industry whereby employers allow workers to take one flight as a passenger in order to work as crew on another. When people live in Nova Scotia and deadhead as part of their work as crew for an airline, they are exempt from self-isolation but must follow the requirements in this protocol.

3.6 Military, defence and police

Members of the Canadian Military and Defence Team personnel, Coast Guard, RCMP, Canadian Border Services Agency, and Canadian Security Intelligence Service can enter Nova Scotia when necessary to carry out their work duties. They can also leave Nova Scotia for this purpose and return without having to self-isolate for 14 days. When travel is required to carry out their work duties, these people need to follow the public health measures outlined in section 4 below.

When members of these agencies are posted to Nova Scotia, they are permitted to enter the province for house hunting. If they and their families have received 2 doses of vaccine at least 14 days before arriving in Nova Scotia to look at houses, they should choose the regular traveler stream of the [Nova Scotia Safe Check-in](#). Approval is automatic. No isolation is required.

If their families are not fully vaccinated, then only the member's spouse or partner is permitted to enter the province. Children are not permitted to accompany them for house hunting. The member must apply to enter the province via the [Nova Scotia Safe Check-in](#) and include their spouse or partner on their form. Approval is automatic. They must isolate fully except while they are viewing properties.

When members of these agencies are moving for a new posting in Nova Scotia, they are exempt from isolation as long as they are beginning their work duties immediately. They must complete the [Nova Scotia Safe Check-in](#). Approval is automatic.

Family members should choose the regular traveler option. Approval is automatic conditional upon being prepared to show vaccination status to border officials. Isolation is based on vaccination status and testing. If members are taking time off before beginning their work duties, they must also choose the regular traveler option.

3.7 First responders

First responders, including police, fire and EHS paramedic workers can enter Nova Scotia when necessary to carry out their work duties without having to self-isolate for 14 days. They can also leave Nova Scotia for this purpose and return, also without having to self-isolate for 14 days. When travel is required to carry out their work duties, these people need to follow the public health measures outlined in section 4 below.

First responders are not required to complete the Nova Scotia Safe Check-in form in advance of arriving in Nova Scotia if doing so would impede their ability to respond to an emergency. They should complete the form as soon as possible afterwards.

NOTE: People are not exempt if they live in Nova Scotia but commute to their first responders work in another jurisdiction. If their schedule fits the criteria of a [rotational worker](#), they have a modified form of self-isolation. If not and they are traveling from within Canada, they are considered regular travelers with isolation based on their vaccination status and testing. If they are international travelers, they must follow the [federal requirements for international travelers](#). Also, people who live in Nova Scotia and commute for their job in another jurisdiction cannot serve as first responders during their time off at home until they have completed self-isolation based on vaccination and testing.

3.8 Essential health care workers

When people are coming to Nova Scotia to start jobs as essential healthcare workers, they must apply to enter the province by completing the [Nova Scotia Safe Check-in](#) and may need to self-isolate based on vaccination status and testing before starting work.

Essential health care workers can enter Nova Scotia to provide short-term support or locum work. They can also leave Nova Scotia for this purpose and return without having to self-isolate based on vaccination status and testing. They must follow protocols set by their occupational health units. They do not complete the Nova Scotia Safe Check-in.

Essential healthcare workers who need to cross the Nova Scotia-New Brunswick border for work can follow the [COVID-19 Atlantic Canada Travel Protocol](#).

4.0 Public health measures

Self-isolation for 14 days upon arrival from outside Nova Scotia is not required for exempted travelers listed in section 1.0 above if the following conditions can be met while they are traveling into Nova Scotia or while they are traveling somewhere outside Nova Scotia for the purposes of completing an exempted activity:

- Travel directly to the location where the exempted activity takes place
- Only use contactless services (i.e. gas and drive-thrus for food/banking)
- If staying overnight or longer is necessary, they must isolate in their overnight accommodation
- Wear a non-medical mask in any indoor public space other than their overnight accommodation
- Have no close contact with anyone, except as required by the nature of the exempted activity
- Monitor their health closely and if they start to feel sick, self-isolate and get tested

When a person returns to Nova Scotia, after completing an exempted activity outside Nova Scotia, they can go to work, school or medical appointments but for 14 days (or the entire time if they are in Nova Scotia for less than 14 days), they must:

- Minimize close contact with other people.
- Avoid close contact with people at higher risk of developing complications from COVID-19 for 14 days. This includes people with underlying chronic or immunocompromising conditions, seniors, and people living in long-term care facilities or other congregate living settings.
- Avoid non-essential visitors in their home/accommodation.
- Avoid non-essential visits and trips outside their home/accommodation.
- Avoid large gatherings.
- Wear a [non-medical mask](#) in any indoor public space or when they are in close contact (less than 2 metres/6 feet) around other people in a private place outside of their home/accommodation.
- Monitor their health closely and if they start to feel sick, self-isolate and book a [COVID-19 test](#) or call 811 if they can't book the test online

Testing for COVID-19 is strongly recommended. See details in Section 5 of this document.

NOTE: Exempt travelers who are fully vaccinated at least 14 days before arriving in Nova Scotia are not required to meet these conditions but they must still complete the [Nova Scotia Safe Check-in](#) form.

5.0 Testing

5.1 Testing when you do not have symptoms

It is strongly recommended that people who are subject to this travel protocol get 3 [COVID-19 tests](#) when they return to Nova Scotia. Book the first test on day 1 or 2. If you are still in Nova Scotia, book the second test on day 6, 7 or 8 and the third test on day 12, 13 or 14. People who cross the border daily or almost daily should get tested once a week.

This testing is strongly recommended even if you show no signs of illness. There is no cost for testing.

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

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.

People who have one mild symptom, other than fever or new or worsening cough, do not have to isolate while waiting for their test and results.

5.3 How to get tested

Book a [COVID-19 test online](#). If you can't book the test online, you can call 811.

Professional truck drivers can [book a test](#) or do a self-administered test. Provincial government is supporting this sector by distributing self-test kits to employers so drivers can pick one up before they leave Nova Scotia. When they return, they can stop at several convenient locations around the province, do the self-test and drop off their sample there. Ask your employer for more information.

Learn more about [COVID-19 testing](#).

6.0 Resources

[Nova Scotia coronavirus website](#)

Nova Scotia Health Authority [COVID-19 testing](#)

[COVID-19 Protocol for Child Custody Travel](#)

[COVID-19 Protocol for Nova Scotia-New Brunswick Travel](#)

[COVID-19 Directive on Rotational Workers](#)

[COVID-19 Directive on Specialized Workers](#)

[Guidance for the use of non-medical masks](#)

[Handwashing poster](#)

[Nova Scotia Health Authority Public Health Offices](#)

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