

COVID-19 Exceptions for Rotational Workers

Directive Under the Authority of the Chief Medical Officer of Health

1.0 Introduction

The goal of COVID-19 Exceptions for Rotational Workers is to, as much as possible, prevent the introduction of the virus into the province and prevent transmission within the province, while balancing the health and wellness of rotational workers and their families. To do this, government has eased some self-isolation requirements for out-of-province rotational workers when they return to Nova Scotia.

All rotational 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 rotational workers for the prevention and control of novel coronavirus (COVID-19). This directive 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 <https://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/>.

This directive uses the term **rotational worker** to include a resident of Nova Scotia who has a set schedule where they alternate between living in Nova Scotia and working outside the province, such as an Alberta oil worker. The directive only applies to rotational workers who travel to another province or territory in Canada (outside Nova Scotia or Prince Edward Island) to work. Rotational workers who work outside of Canada must follow federal isolation and testing requirements in the Quarantine Act.

This directive uses the term **household members** to refer to those individuals living in the same home on an ongoing basis. Household members do not need to self-quarantine as long as they have no symptoms, and they should not be excluded from work or recreational activities.

2.0 Modified Self-isolation

2.1 Overview

This directive, given under the authority of the Health Protection Act (HPA), gives rotational workers a modified form of 14-day self-isolation. It allows some activities and also imposes restrictions to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

2.2 Indoor Activities

- Rotational workers may interact with people that live in their household.
 - Maintaining physical distance from household members is not necessary unless the rotational worker becomes unwell.
- If the rotational worker or household member becomes unwell, complete the [COVID-19 self-assessment](#). Even if you only have one mild symptom, you need to get tested. You can call 811 if you can't complete the assessment online.
- Spending time at a cabin or vacation home (or a rental location) within the province is allowed, following the same rules as if at home.

2.3 Outdoor Activities

- Rotational workers can spend time outside on their own property, alone or with household members. They may also spend time outside on the property of a single-family cabin or vacation home within the province, following the same rules as if at home.
- Rotational workers can go for a walk, run, hike, or bike ride for exercise and recreation off their property. If the rotational worker encounters people from outside their household, they must wear a non-medical mask and maintain a distance of two metres or six feet.
- Rotational workers can do the following activities **without getting out of their vehicle**:
 - Go for a drive.
 - Go for a ride on a recreational vehicle (such as an ATV or snowmobile).
 - Drop off and pick up household members at school, work or recreational activities.
 - No-contact pick-up of groceries or other items purchased online or by telephone.

- o Attending a drive-in theatre.
- o Using a drive-thru, for example at a restaurant or bank.
- Rotational workers may also visit a park, beach or other outdoor public space. The space should not be crowded, and if the worker encounters people from outside their household, they must wear a non-medical mask and maintain a distance of two metres or six feet.

2.4 Medical Appointments

- Rotational workers may attend necessary (urgent and routine) medical appointments. This includes medical appointments with physicians and nurse practitioners, dentists, optometrists and other regulated health professionals where in-person treatment is required.
- Rotational workers must wear a mask and coordinate with their care provider to determine additional precautions. If rotational workers are feeling unwell, they must complete the [COVID-19 self-assessment](#) as above prior to booking an appointment.
- A list of regulated health professions can be found at <http://www.nsrhpn.ca/member-listing/>.

2.5 Ongoing Restrictions

The following activities continue to be restricted for rotational workers during their 14-day isolation period:

- Entering public places. This includes, but is not limited to, schools, grocery stores, shopping malls, banks, religious institutions, restaurants/bars, and indoor and outdoor gatherings with people from outside their household.
- Visiting people outside of their household.
- Allowing those outside of their household to visit on their property or in their home while they are isolating.
- Volunteering or working in any capacity that requires them to be in contact with non-household members. This includes volunteer fire departments, due to the potential requirement to isolate multiple firefighters from one community should COVID-19 be identified.

2.6 Monitoring

Prior to each trip to Nova Scotia, rotational workers must complete the Safe Check-in Form online and in advance of arrival at <http://novascotia.ca/travel-checkin>. They must respond to a daily check-in email confirming that they are complying with their modified form of self-isolation.

3.0 Asymptomatic testing

3.1 Why get tested

Effective March 1, 2021, rotational workers who have no symptoms are required to get tested on day 1 or 2. If they are still in Nova Scotia, they must book another test on day 6, 7 or 8, and on day 12, 13 or 14 of their modified self-isolation. This testing is mandatory. There is no cost to rotational workers.

A negative test result does not give 100% certainty that a rotational worker does not have COVID-19. That is why it does not mean rotational workers can stop their modified form of self-isolation. They must complete the full 14 days of self-isolation.

However, it is an added layer of protection that is recommended because it is a good indication that a rotational worker is not likely carrying and transmitting the virus unknowingly.

3.2 Booking a test

Rotational workers must complete the [COVID-19 self-assessment](#) to book their appointments. Follow the directions that the assessment gives. Do not call 811 to book a test unless you cannot access the online self-assessment.

Rotational workers can break their modified form of self-isolation just to get tested. They should wear a non-medical mask when going between their vehicle and the 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.

4.0 Vaccination

Rotational workers who live in Nova Scotia will be eligible for vaccination in the second phase of the COVID-19 vaccine rollout. Exact timing is to be determined. More information will be shared when details have been finalized.

Please note that most jurisdictions are developing their vaccine rollout plans with the intention that people will get their first and second dose in the same place. When you are eligible to get vaccinated, you should make plans to ensure you get your first and the second dose in the same place.

If you get your first dose elsewhere and then come to Nova Scotia, we cannot guarantee that we will have a second dose of the right vaccine for you or that you will get it within the right timeframe for that vaccine.

This is one of many complexities in a vaccine rollout of this magnitude. We are looking at how to manage these situations in Nova Scotia.

5.0 Resources

<https://covid-self-assessment.novascotia.ca/en> to complete the self-assessment for COVID-19

Nova Scotia Coronavirus webpage: <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/>

Nova Scotia Safe Check-in: <https://travel-declaration.novascotia.ca/en>

Government of Canada: <https://canada.ca/coronavirus>

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

NSHA Public Health Offices: <http://www.nshealth.ca/public-health-offices>

Guidance for the use of Non-Medical Masks: <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/stayinghealthy/#masks>

Handwashing poster: <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/Hand-Washing-Poster.pdf>

The Mental Health Provincial Crisis Line is available 24/7 to anyone experiencing a mental health or addictions crisis, or someone concerned about them, by calling 1-888-429-8167 (toll-free)

Kids Help Phone is available 24/7 by calling 1-800-668-6868 (toll-free)

For help or information about domestic violence 24/7, call 1-855-225-0220 (toll-free)