

COVID-19 Exceptions for Specialized Workers

Directive Under the Authority of the Chief Medical Officer of Health

September 24, 2020

The goal of COVID-19 Exceptions for Specialized Workers 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 is easing some self-isolation requirements for out-of-province specialized workers when they 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 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 phac-aspc.gc.ca/.

1.0 Definitions

This directive uses the term specialized workers to include workers required to complete urgent and critical work in Nova Scotia that requires specialized skills unavailable in Atlantic Canada. For example, specialized worker exceptions would include:

- people who are essential to the inspection, installation or repair of specialized equipment
- people who are essential to the maintenance and repair of critical infrastructure
- people who are essential to the completion of large construction projects

This directive 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.

2.0 Exception Process

2.1 Overview

This directive, given under the authority of the Health Protection Act (HPA), allows specialized workers who are required to complete essential work in Nova Scotia to receive an automatic Specialized Worker Exception if they meet the criteria identified in this directive.

The Specialized Worker exception allows these workers to complete their work in Nova Scotia – including travel to and from the worksite – while self-isolating at their place of residence when not working.

2.2 Process

Prior to each trip to Nova Scotia, specialized workers must complete the Safe Check-in Form online at novascotia.ca/travel-checkin. The daily electronic check-in process has also been updated for specialized workers to reflect the above allowances. An automatic acknowledgement of their exception will be provided, which should be shown to border officials.

Following completion of the Safe Check-in Form (business stream), 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 3.1, in this document and any plan in place for the worksite

If more than 10 specialized workers from one business are entering Nova Scotia from outside of Atlantic Canada within a one month period, the business is also required to provide details of their workplace COVID-19 prevention plan to covid19info@novascotia.ca prior to travel.

3.0 Isolation Requirements

3.1 Restrictions

This exception only allows a specialized worker to work in the province prior to the completion of their 14-day isolation period.

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.
- 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.
- monitor their symptoms closely, and if they start to feel sick, self-isolate and complete the Covid-19 assessment online or by calling 811. Symptoms of Covid-19 include: fever (i.e. chills/sweats) OR cough (new or worsening) OR two or more of the following symptoms (new or worsening): sore throat, runny nose/nasal congestion, headache, shortness of breath

3.2 Resources

811: 811.novascotia.ca/ to complete a self-assessment for COVID-19

Nova Scotia Coronavirus webpage: novascotia.ca/coronavirus/

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

Government of Canada: canada.ca/coronavirus

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

NSHA Public Health Offices: nshealth.ca/public-health-offices

Guidance for the use of Non-Medical Masks:

novascotia.ca/coronavirus/masks/

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