

COVID-19 Exceptions for Specialized Workers

Directive Under the Authority of the Chief Medical Officer of Health

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 has eased 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 Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. This directive only applies to specialized workers within Canada. International workers are subject to the federal Quarantine Act.

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 anywhere except Prince Edward Island within a one month period, the business is also required to provide details of their workplace COVID-19 prevention plan to NSEconomy@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 self-assessment](#) online. Even if you only have one mild symptom, you need to get tested.

4.0 Asymptomatic testing

4.1 Why get tested

Effective March 1, 2021, 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, 7 or 8 and on day 12, 13 or 14. This testing is mandatory. There is no cost to specialized workers.

A negative test result does not give 100% certainty that a specialized worker does not have COVID-19. That is why it does not mean specialized workers can stop their self-isolation when not at their work sites. They must continue to self-isolate when not at work for the full 14 days.

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.

4.2 Booking a test

Specialized workers must complete 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.

5.0 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