COVID-19 Protocol for Atlantic Canada Travel

Under the Authority of the Chief Medical Officer of Health

Last Revised December 9, 2021

1.0 Introduction

This protocol is for people who live in Atlantic Canada and who must travel between Nova Scotia and another Atlantic province frequently or for certain situations.

Everyone must follow the Public Health Order issued by the Chief Medical Officer of Health. It requires people traveling from outside Nova Scotia to self-isolate for up to 14 days upon arrival in Nova Scotia, unless they were fully vaccinated at least 14 days before arriving, they have an exemption under the Public Health Order, or they have an exception granted for a specific purpose. It also requires most travelers to complete the Nova Scotia Safe Check-in form.

However, we recognize that many people need to travel between Nova Scotia and other Atlantic provinces on a regular basis or for certain situations. This protocol aims to balance that need with measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

This guidance in this document 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 posts regular updates and related documents.

2.0 Exemptions for self-isolation

When people who live in Atlantic Canada are traveling for reasons outlined in Section 3 of this protocol, they are not required to complete the Nova Scotia Safe Check-in form. However, they should be able to demonstrate to border officials that they are traveling for one of these reasons. People who travel frequently across the Nova Scotia-New Brunswick land border (such as daily or weekly) can request a chit from border officials to display in their vehicle.
When people are traveling for reasons other than those outlined in Section 3 of this protocol, they are considered regular travelers who cannot follow this protocol. They must complete the Nova Scotia Safe Check-in form in advance. If they are not fully vaccinated, they have isolation requirements. Examples of travel not covered by this protocol include moving to Nova Scotia, coming for a visit, coming for an extended stay, or traveling for something that is not necessary or could be done virtually.

3.0 Reasons for travel

People who live in Atlantic Canada can follow this protocol if they are traveling for one of the following reasons:

3.1 Workers and students

Many people must travel between Nova Scotia and another Atlantic province on a regular and ongoing basis (such as daily or weekly) to work or to attend a school or post-secondary institution. Some live in one province but use child care services in the other on a regular and ongoing basis. When traveling for these reasons, they are not required to complete the Nova Scotia Safe Check-in form. If they are not fully vaccinated, they are exempt from the self-isolation requirement as long as they follow the conditions in Section 4 of this protocol.

3.2 Veterinary services

People sometimes need to seek specialty veterinary services in a neighbouring province. Licensed veterinarians and registered veterinary technicians (RVT) also sometimes need to travel to neighbouring provinces to care for animals. When traveling for these reasons, they are not required to complete the Nova Scotia Safe Check-in form. If they are not fully vaccinated, they are exempt from the self-isolation requirement as long as they follow the conditions in Section 4 of this protocol.

3.3 Occasional necessary travel

Sometimes people who live in either Nova Scotia or another Atlantic province must occasionally make quick trips between these provinces to accomplish work, school or other tasks that are necessary and cannot be accomplished virtually. Overnight trips are possible but should be avoided. When traveling for these reasons, they are not required to complete the Nova Scotia Safe Check-in form. If they are not fully vaccinated, they are exempt from the self-isolation requirement as long as they follow the conditions in Section 4 of this protocol.
4.0 Conditions for travelers who are not fully vaccinated

Everyone must follow the Public Health requirements in Nova Scotia and in other Atlantic provinces.

All travelers who are not fully vaccinated (i.e., they are not 14 days past a second dose of most vaccines or after a single dose of Janssen) must meet the following conditions, whether they are going to another Atlantic province or coming into Nova Scotia:

• drive directly to and from the destination (such as a workplace or school)
• only use contactless services (i.e., gas and drive-thrus for food/banking)
• if staying overnight 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 their work or studies

When they return to Nova Scotia, travelers who were not fully vaccinated need to:

• minimize close contact with other people for 14 days (or the entire time if they are in Nova Scotia for less than 14 days)
• book up to three COVID-19 tests when they return - see section 5.1 below
• wear a non-medical mask in any indoor public space or when they are around other people in a private place outside of their home/accommodation
• avoid non-essential visits outside their home/accommodation
• avoid large gatherings
• 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.
5.0 Testing

5.1 Testing when you do not have symptoms

People who travel occasionally from another Atlantic province to Nova Scotia and Nova Scotians who travel outside the province and return are encouraged to get tested up to three times, even if they show no signs of illness. The first test should be on day 1 or 2. If they are still in the province, they should get tested again on day 6, 7 or 8 and on day 12, 13 or 14.

People who travel regularly, such as daily or weekly, should get tested once a week.

There is no cost for testing and it is voluntary.

A negative test result does not give 100% certainty that a person does not have COVID-19. However, testing is recommended as 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 if directed to, and follow the isolation directions provided.

5.3 Booking a test

People can book a COVID-19 test online. Do not call 811 to book a test unless you cannot book it online.

6.0 Resources

Nova Scotia coronavirus website

Guidance for the use of masks

Handwashing poster

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