1.0 Introduction

The goal of COVID-19 Rotational Worker Protocol 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 protocol 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 protocol 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 protocol only applies to rotational workers who travel to work in another Canadian province or territory and to international rotational workers who are exempt from self-isolation under the federal Quarantine Act.

Other rotational workers who work outside Canada and are required to isolate under the Quarantine Act must follow federal isolation and testing requirements in the Quarantine Act. They do not follow this protocol.

This protocol 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

Prior to each trip, rotational workers must apply to enter the province by completing the Nova Scotia Safe Check-in form. They cannot enter the province until they receive approval. They should apply about a week before they travel. They need to do the full application process for their first trip back to Nova Scotia since May 14. They will be asked for documentation showing they are a rotational worker and the name and location of their worksite.

It will take up to 3 business days for their application to be reviewed. If they are approved, they will receive an approval letter via email. They must show this approval letter to border officials.

For each subsequent trip, they will get approval faster (likely within 1 business day) because they will have already provided their documentation and been confirmed as rotational workers.

Rotational workers must fully self-isolate in a completely separate space from the rest of their household until they receive their first negative test result in Nova Scotia (see testing requirements in Section 3).

Once they receive that negative test result, this protocol, 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.

NOTE: Rotational workers who are returning home from outbreak zones cannot do the modified form of self-isolation. They must self-isolate for 14 days in a completely separate space from their households, although they can share a bathroom that is cleaned between uses. If they can accomplish this, the rest of their household does not need to isolate with them. Except for vaccination appointments and their mandatory COVID-19 testing, they cannot attend medical appointments unless there is an emergency.
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.
  - Attending a drive-in theatre.
  
  - 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. This also includes appointments for COVID-19 vaccine.

- 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 Testing

3.1 Testing when you have no symptoms

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

3.2 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. If you can't book the test online, you can call 811.

3.3 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 Resources


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


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)