

# COVID-19 Rotational Worker Protocol

*Under the Authority of the Chief Medical Officer of Health*

Revised July 7, 2021

## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Overview

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, dated March 24, 2020, and any direction arising from that Order and directives given under the authority of the Health Protection Act.

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/>.

### 1.2 Definitions

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 (outside Atlantic Canada) and to international rotational workers who are exempt from self-isolation under the federal Quarantine Act for reasons other than vaccination status.

Effective July 5, fully vaccinated workers who meet all requirements for entering Canada do not have to quarantine. They do not follow this protocol. Learn more about [federal requirements](#). Other rotational workers from another province or territory outside Atlantic Canada 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.

Effective June 30, workers who have no COVID-19 symptoms and have been fully vaccinated (ie both doses of a 2-dose series of vaccine approved by the World Health Organization) at least 14 days before arriving in Nova Scotia can enter the province as regular travelers by completing the [Nova Scotia Safe Check-in](#). They do not follow this protocol. There is no mandatory isolation or testing for regular travelers who are fully vaccinated, although regular testing continues to be recommended.

A person who travels, for example, to attend a business meeting outside Nova Scotia once a month is not considered a rotational worker. A person who lives in Nova Scotia and travels to their job outside the province but does not work on a rotational schedule is not considered a rotational worker. A person who travels into Nova Scotia to work in this province on a set rotational schedule is not considered a rotational worker. This protocol does not apply to any of these scenarios.

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 Entry requirements

Prior to each trip, partially vaccinated and unvaccinated rotational workers must apply to enter the province by completing the [Nova Scotia Safe Check-in](#) form. They can upload their vaccination status in their form. Approval is automatic.

## 3.0 Isolation requirements

### 3.1 Partially vaccinated rotational worker

Rotational workers who have no symptoms and received one dose of vaccine at least 14 days before they arrive in Nova Scotia must isolate for seven days. They must isolate fully until they receive their first negative test result and then they can switch to modified isolation as outlined in Section 3.5. They must receive a second negative test result in order to leave isolation after seven days. They must complete the full seven days, regardless of when they receive their test results. If they do not have their second negative test result after seven days, they must continue isolating until they get their second negative test result. Even if they are allowed to stop isolating, they must still do the third test if they are still in Nova Scotia as outlined in Section 4.

Only vaccines approved by the World Health Organization will be accepted. People who receive a first or second dose of vaccine less than 14 days before they arrive in Nova Scotia cannot apply that dose to their vaccination status. For example, a person who gets one dose less than 14 days before they arrive is considered to have no vaccination. A person who gets a second dose less than 14 days before they arrive is considered to have one dose.

Testing must be done in Nova Scotia, not in advance of arrival. It must be a standard PCR lab test, not a rapid test. See more information about getting a test in Nova Scotia in Section 4 of this protocol.

Starting on their second day in the province, each traveler will receive daily check-in emails to which they must respond. Once a person has met their isolation obligations based on vaccination status and testing, they can unsubscribe from the daily check-in email via the unsubscribe link in the email.

### 3.2 Unvaccinated rotational workers

Rotational workers who had not received any doses of vaccine at least 14 days before arriving must fully self-isolate as outlined in Section 3.3 below until they receive their first negative test result in Nova Scotia (see testing requirements in Section 4). Once they receive their first negative test result, rotational workers can switch to modified 14-day self-isolation outlined in Section 3.4 below.

### 3.3 Full self-isolation

Full self-isolation means the rotational worker stays in a completely separate space from their households. However, they can share a bathroom with the others in the household as long as it is cleaned between uses.

Except for vaccination appointments and their mandatory COVID-19 testing, they cannot attend medical appointments unless there is an emergency.

### 3.4 Modified self-isolation

- 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.
- Rotational workers who have no symptoms can continue to carry out child custody agreements. However, the rotational worker must otherwise continue to follow isolation requirements in this protocol.
- 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.
- 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.

## 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/>. Regulated health professionals are governed by regulatory colleges that are responsible for ensuring they provide health services in a safe, professional and ethical manner. The oversight provided by the regulatory college adds a layer of protection to the public with respect to strict compliance with approved COVID-19 plans for those professions. If a health professional refuses you services, you can contact their association for guidance.

## 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.

## Households

People who live in a rotational worker's household do not need to self-isolate unless they become unwell. They are free to continue their regular routines.

## Monitoring

Based on their application via the Nova Scotia Safe Check-in, rotational workers receive a daily check-in email starting on their second day in Nova Scotia. They must respond to the daily check-in email confirming that they are complying with self-isolation requirements.

Fully vaccinated rotational workers will no longer receive these emails at all. Partially vaccinated rotational workers who are allowed to leave isolation after 7 days and negative test results can unsubscribe from the emails via the URL provided in the emails.

# 4.0 Testing

## 4.1 Testing when you have no symptoms

Partially vaccinated and unvaccinated 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 5 or 6, and on day 12, 13 or 14 of their modified self-isolation. This testing is mandatory and must be done in Nova Scotia, not before arrival. There is no cost to rotational workers. Household members are not required to get tested, but regular testing is encouraged for all Nova Scotians.

Audits are done to check testing data for randomly chosen rotational workers. If they did not do their first test, they will get a phone call reminding them that it is mandatory. If they do not get their second test, they will be issued a \$1,000 fine.

Partially vaccinated rotational workers must follow the isolation requirements outlined in Section 3.1. Unvaccinated rotational workers must complete the full 14 days of self-isolation

outlined in Section 3.2.

A negative test result does not give 100% certainty that a rotational worker does not have COVID-19. However, testing is an added layer of protection because a negative test result is a good indication that a rotational worker is not likely carrying and transmitting the virus unknowingly.

## 4.2 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.

## 4.3 Booking a test

Rotational workers can get a standard PCR lab test if they arrive by air at the Halifax Stanfield International Airport. They can also book COVID-19 tests at testing sites around the province by completing 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.

## 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)