

COVID-19 Specialized Worker Protocol

Under the Authority of the Chief Medical Officer of Health

Last Revised July 15, 2021

1.0 Introduction

The goal of COVID-19 Specialized Worker Protocol 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 considers applications for exceptions for some out-of-province specialized workers to 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 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 phac-aspc.gc.ca.

2.0 Definitions

This protocol uses the term specialized workers to include workers who are required to complete urgent and critical work in Nova Scotia that requires specialized skills unavailable within this province. This protocol only applies to specialized workers within Canada (outside Atlantic Canada) and to specialized workers from outside Canada 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 specialized workers who come from outside of Canada and who 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 from another province or territory outside Atlantic Canada who have no COVID-19 symptoms and who 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.

At this time, partially vaccinated and unvaccinated specialized workers can apply to enter Nova Scotia for two categories of work:

- Work on critical infrastructure that is crucial to the functioning of the province. A list of critical infrastructure included in this definition is available at: publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/ntnl-scrtr/crtcl-nfrstrctr/esf-sfe-en.aspx
- Work that is necessary to preserve the viability of one or more Nova Scotia businesses. Applicants will be required to provide information that demonstrates significant impacts to one or more Nova Scotia businesses.

This protocol 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.

3.0 Application process

Prior to each trip, specialized workers who are partially vaccinated and unvaccinated must apply to enter the province by completing the Nova Scotia [Safe Check-in form](#). Approval is automatic. They must be prepared to show their approval email to border officials, along with documentation proving they are entering the province for work as specialized workers and proof of vaccination, if applicable.

If more than 10 specialized workers from one business are coming 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.

4.0 Isolation Requirements

4.1 Unvaccinated specialized workers

Once they receive approval and enter the province, specialized workers coming from outside Atlantic Canada who had not received any doses of vaccine at least 14 days before arriving 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 4.1, in this document and any plan in place for the worksite

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](#) to book a test. Even if you only have one mild symptom, you need to get tested.

4.2 Partially vaccinated specialized workers

Specialized workers who have no symptoms and who received one dose of vaccine at least 14 days before they arrive in Nova Scotia must isolate when they are not working for seven days. They must have two negative tests results 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 when they are not working until they get their second negative test result.

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 5 of this protocol.

Starting on their second day in the province, each specialized worker 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.

5.0 Testing

5.1 Testing when you do not have symptoms

Partially vaccinated and unvaccinated 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.

Even if specialized workers are allowed to stop isolating based on vaccination status and testing, they must still complete all three mandatory tests (if they are in the province long enough to do all three).

A negative test result does not give 100% certainty that a specialized 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 specialized worker is not likely carrying and transmitting the virus unknowingly.

Testing must be done in Nova Scotia, not in advance of arrival. It must be a standard PCR lab test which takes up to 72 hours to be processed in Nova Scotia. It cannot be a rapid test which gives a result in minutes.

5.2 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.

5.3 Booking a test

Specialized 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 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.

6.0 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