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 Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador) and to specialized workers from outside Canada who are exempt from self-isolation under the federal Quarantine Act.

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.
At this time, 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: https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/ntnl-scrt/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 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 not start traveling to Nova Scotia until they receive approval.

They should apply about a week before they intend to travel. It will take up to 3 business days for their completed 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, along with documentation proving they are entering the province for work as specialized workers.

The specialized worker exception allows workers coming for urgent work on critical infrastructure 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. Specialized workers coming for urgent work necessary to preserve the viability of one or more Nova Scotia businesses will be required to self-isolate for 14 days prior to commencing work.

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 Specialized workers coming from outside Atlantic Canada

Once they receive approval and enter the province, specialized workers coming from outside Atlantic Canada 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 Workers coming from New Brunswick

Effective June 23, workers coming from New Brunswick have three options. They can choose the one that is most advantageous for their situation.

4.2.1 Follow Nova Scotia New Brunswick travel protocol

People can follow the COVID-19 Protocol for Nova Scotia-New Brunswick Travel for work related travel. They do not complete the Nova Scotia Safe Check-in and they do not self-isolate as long as conditions in the protocol are met.
4.2.2 Enter as New Brunswick resident

Workers can apply via the Nova Scotia Safe Check-in to enter Nova Scotia as a New Brunswick resident. New Brunswick residents are permitted to enter Nova Scotia for any reason. Their isolation requirements are based on their vaccination status and testing. When Nova Scotia residents go to New Brunswick and return, they have the same requirements. The requirements are:

- People who had two doses of vaccine at least 14 days before arriving in Nova Scotia are not required to self-isolate. Testing is still recommended.

- People who received one dose of vaccine at least 14 days before they arrive in Nova Scotia must self-isolate 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 isolation until they get their second negative test result.

- People with no vaccination must self-isolate for 14 days. Testing is recommended the beginning and end of their isolation.

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. See more information about getting a test in Nova Scotia in Section 4 of this protocol.

These travelers must complete the Nova Scotia Safe Check-in form. They will be able to upload their proof of vaccination into their Safe Check-in form. They will receive automatic approval on the condition that they are prepared to show their proof of vaccination to border officials.

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.
4.2.3 Enter as a specialized worker

Workers can apply via the Nova Scotia Safe Check-in to enter Nova Scotia as a specialized worker and wait for their application to be approved. If they are approved, they have very similar isolation requirements based on vaccination status and testing as New Brunswick residents. The only difference is that New Brunswick residents must isolate fully while specialized workers can work and must isolate when they are not working:

- Specialized workers who had two doses of vaccine at least 14 days before arriving in Nova Scotia are not required to self-isolate. Testing is still recommended.

- Specialized workers from New Brunswick 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.

- Specialized workers from New Brunswick with no vaccination must isolate when they are not working for 14 days as outlined in section 2.2 of this protocol. Testing is mandatory as outlined in Section 5.

All the other conditions in Section 4.2.2 apply to specialized workers from New Brunswick.

This provision is only for specialized workers from New Brunswick who enter Nova Scotia. It does not apply to workers traveling from other provinces and territories or other countries. It does not apply to Nova Scotia workers who go to New Brunswick and return – they cannot go to work and otherwise isolate, they must isolate fully and potentially stop earlier than 14 days based on vaccination status and testing.

5.0 Testing

5.1 Testing when you do not have symptoms

Effective March 1, 2021, all 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, the 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.

For workers who enter Nova Scotia from New Brunswick, testing is only required if you have one dose of vaccine, your travel was only between Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, and you wish to stop isolating earlier than 14 days as outlined in Section 4.2.

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