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 has eased some self-isolation requirements for out-of-province specialized workers when they 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 required to complete urgent and critical work in Nova Scotia that requires specialized skills unavailable in Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador. This protocol only applies to specialized workers within Canada and to specialized workers come from outside Canada and 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, only specialized workers who are needed for urgent work on critical infrastructure that is crucial to the functioning of the province are permitted to enter Nova Scotia. 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

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 Exception Process

#### 3.1 Overview

This protocol, given under the authority of the Health Protection Act (HPA), allows specialized workers who are required to complete urgent critical infrastructure work in Nova Scotia to apply for a Specialized Worker Exception if they meet the criteria identified in this directive.

The Specialized Worker exception allows these workers 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.

#### 3.2 Process

Prior to each trip to Nova Scotia, specialized workers must apply for an exception by completing the Safe Check-in Form at novascotia.ca/travel-checkin. The application will be reviewed. If approved, the worker will receive an exception letter via email. The worker will need to show this letter to border officials upon arrival.

Following completion of the Safe Check-in Form (business stream), specialized workers 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 3.1, in this document and any plan in place
for the worksite

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 Restrictions

This exception only allows a specialized worker to work in the province prior to the completion of their 14-day isolation period.

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 online. Even if you only have one mild symptom, you need to get tested.
5.0 Testing

5.1 Testing when you do not have symptoms

Effective March 1, 2021, 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.

A negative test result does not give 100% certainty that a specialized worker does not have COVID-19. That is why it does not mean specialized workers can stop their self-isolation when not at their work sites. They must continue to self-isolate when not at work for the full 14 days.

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.

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 must complete 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