

COVID-19 Protocol for Fish Harvesters

Under the Authority of the Chief Medical Officer of Health

The goal of COVID-19 Protocol for Fish Harvesters is to, as much as possible, prevent the introduction of the virus into the province and prevent transmission within the province while balancing the needs of Fish Harvesters in the carrying out of their duties. To do this, government allows a modified form of self-isolation for out-of-province fish harvesters when they travel to Nova Scotia as a requirement of their work.

All fish harvesters must follow the [Public Health Order](#) issued by the Chief Medical Officer of Health, and any direction arising from that Order and directives given under the authority of the Health Protection Act and the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

This document provides direction to fish harvesters for the prevention and control of 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 www.phac-aspc.gc.ca.

1.0 Definitions and scope

1.1 Definitions

This protocol uses the term **fish harvester** to include skilled workers required to enter Nova Scotia to carry out fish harvesting and its required associated activities, which are conducted either on land or via fishing vessel. For the purposes of this definition, fish harvesting is the commercial or licensed activity of catching fish and other seafood for market or other approved activities. It does not include recreational fishery.

For example, fish harvesters would include:

- People who are engaged in the act of fish harvesting,
- People who are essential to the preparation, maintenance, and repair of required fishing infrastructure to support imminent or ongoing fish harvesting activities

This protocol uses the term **place of residence** to refer to the location where fish harvesters reside during their time in Nova Scotia. A place of residence can be a fishing vessel, house, hotel, RV, or vacation rental (house, apartment, cabin, etc.) that allows for isolation as per the requirements below.

The protocol also uses the term **workplace** to refer to the location where the fish harvesters conduct activities directly related to and including fish harvesting. This may be a land-based location or a fishing vessel.

1.2 Scope

This protocol only applies to fish harvesters who come from Canadian provinces or territories outside Nova Scotia. It does not apply to international workers. International workers are subject to the federal Quarantine Act.

This protocol only applies when these fish harvesters enter Nova Scotia to complete work directly related to planned fish harvesting. Work that is not directly related to fish harvesting, such as boat building and/or annual maintenance, does not fall under this protocol.

This protocol does not apply to temporary foreign workers. Employers wishing to bring temporary foreign workers into Nova Scotia to work in the seafood sector must follow the [Guidance for Temporary Foreign Workers in Seafood](#) in order to meet the requirements for these workers as described in the Public Health Order.

2.0 Entering Nova Scotia

2.1 Overview

When fish harvesters must come to Nova Scotia to work, this Protocol for Fish Harvesters allows them to complete their work while self-isolating at their place of residence when not working. Isolation and other requirements are further detailed in Section 3.

2.2 Process

Prior to each trip, fish harvesters 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 intend to travel. 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, along with documentation proving they are entering the province for work as fish harvesters.

Once they receive an approval letter, fish harvesters are permitted to enter and exit Nova Scotia via fishing vessel or drive to and from the airport or border crossing and their place of residence in the province, as long as they meet the requirements in Section 3 below.

3.0 Requirements

During their first 14 days in Nova Scotia, fish harvesters must adhere to the following requirements:

- Self-isolate when they are not at work and while they travel to and from the workplace
 - Fish harvesters may self-isolate onboard a vessel if all other occupants of the vessel also follow this Protocol for Fish Harvesters – everyone onboard must remain in isolation (except while working) until the last crew member who arrived onboard completes the 14-day self-isolation period
- Use only contactless services (i.e. gas and drive-thrus for food/banking)
- Wear non-medical masks and/or PPE required for their work
- Maintain physical distance (2 metres/6 feet) while working as much as possible
- Wear a non-medical mask in public spaces where they are working
- Leave their accommodations only to travel to the worksite
- Have meals delivered or use curbside pickup
- Have all required supplies such as groceries, toiletries, fishing supplies, and fuel for fish harvesting delivered to the workplace and/or accommodations
- Travel directly between the worksite and accommodations – no other trips into the community are permitted (no shopping, visiting, or tourism activities)

- Monitor their health closely, and if they develop symptoms, 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
- Conduct routine cleaning and sanitization of shared spaces onboard vessels

4.0 Testing

4.1 Testing when you have no symptoms

Fish Harvesters who have no symptoms should [book a COVID-19 test](#) on day 1 or 2 in Nova Scotia. If they are still in the province, they should get tested again on day 6, 7 or 8 and on day 12,13, or 14. This testing schedule serves as a guide for fish harvesters because we recognize that their work schedule, especially those who work at sea, may not fit with this this testing schedule.

Testing should be done even if you have no signs of illness. There is no cost for testing. While this testing is voluntary, it is strongly recommended for fish harvesters.

A negative test result does not give 100% certainty that a fish harvester does not have COVID-19. That is why it does not mean fish harvesters can stop their self-isolation when not at their worksites. 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 fish harvester 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

Fish harvesters must complete the online assessment to [book a COVID-19 test](#). Follow the directions that the assessment gives. Do not call 811 to book a test unless you cannot access the online self-assessment.

Fish harvesters 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 nonmedical mask, if there is no other alternative.

5.0 Resources

[COVID-19 self-assessment](#)

Nova Scotia [coronavirus website](#)

[Nova Scotia Safe Check-in](#) form

[Guidance for Temporary Foreign Workers in Seafood](#)

Nova Scotia Health Authority [Public Health Offices](#)

Guidance for the use of [non-medical masks](#)

[Handwashing poster](#)

Government of Canada [coronavirus website](#)

Government of Canada information line: **1-833-784-4397 (toll-free)**