

Rotational Workers Modified Self-Isolation and Testing

NOTE: This FAQ is available in fact sheet format for easy sharing with rotational workers and others:
<https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/rotational-workers-self-isolation-and-testing-factsheet.pdf>

The rotational worker directive is also online at:

<https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/COVID-19-Directive-on-Exceptions-for-Rotational-Workers.pdf>

DEFINITION OF ROTATIONAL WORKER

What's the definition of rotational worker?

A rotational worker is someone 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 schedule is determined by their employer and includes no more than 4 weeks at home in Nova Scotia at a time.

Why is the limit 4 weeks at home?

If your schedule has you at home for more than 4 weeks at a time, you are not considered a rotational worker who can do a modified form of self-isolation because, unlike many others, you are not required under the public health order to spend at least half, if not all your time at home in self-isolation.

If I attend a business meeting outside the Atlantic bubble once a month, am I a rotational worker?

This does not apply to people who, for example, attend a business meeting outside Nova Scotia, PEI or Newfoundland and Labrador once a month.

MODIFIED SELF-ISOLATION

Do rotational workers have to self-isolate for 14 days?

Yes, rotational workers must self-isolate for 14 days when they return from outside Nova Scotia, PEI or Newfoundland and Labrador. Recognizing that they spend at least half, if not all their time at home in isolation, they are allowed have a modified form of self-isolation that gives them some more freedom.

What are the allowed activities?

Rotational workers are allowed the following activities alone or with their household members:

- Interacting with people who live in their household. Maintaining physical distance from household members is not necessary unless the rotational worker becomes unwell. Household members do not need to self-isolate unless they become unwell
- Spending time outside on their own property
- Going for a drive
- Going for a walk, run, hike, bike or ATV ride for exercise and recreation off their property (if they encounter people from outside their household, they must wear a mask and maintain a distance of two metres)
- Visiting a park, beach or other outdoor public space (if they encounter people from outside their household, they must wear a mask and maintain a distance of two metres)
- Spending time at their cabin or vacation home (or a rental location) within the province, following the same rules as if at home
- Dropping off and picking up household members at school, work or recreational activities without getting out of the vehicle

- No-contact pick-up of groceries or other items purchased online without getting out of the vehicle
- Attending a drive-in theatre without getting out of the vehicle
- Going through a drive-thru, for example at a restaurant or bank
- Attending necessary (urgent and routine) medical appointments. This includes appointments with physicians and nurse practitioners, dentists, optometrists and other regulated health professionals where in-person treatment is required

Is there anything I still cannot do under the changes to the self-isolation requirements for rotational workers?

The following activities continue to be restricted:

- Entering public places (e.g. schools, grocery stores, shopping malls, banks, religious institutions, restaurants/bars)
- Attending indoor and outdoor gatherings
- Visiting people outside their household
- Allowing people from outside their household to visit them on their property or in their home
- Volunteering or working in any capacity that requires them to be in contact with people outside their household

What if I am sick? Am I still allowed to do these activities?

Anyone who has symptoms must stay home, self-isolate from other people in your household, and do the online [COVID-19 Self-Assessment](#). If they can't do it online, they can contact 811.

Can the people I live with still continue to go to work and school?

Yes. Household members do not need to self-isolate unless they become unwell

Does the self-isolation requirement for non-essential travel affect rotational workers? Does their whole household have to self-isolate?

Rotational workers continue to have modified self-isolation, which includes contact with people in their households. However, if a member of the rotational worker's household chooses to travel for non-essential reasons, the entire household (including the rotational worker) must self-isolate, unless there is a completely separate living space with a bathroom where the traveler can self-isolate.

Why can't I go to an outdoor gathering?

We have done our best to balance restrictions to reduce risk of transmission and the health, wellbeing and family lives of rotational workers. We have focused on the modifying the restrictions that we've been told have the greatest impact.

What if a rotational worker has a court order or shared custody agreement? Am I still required to self-isolate?

People who have no symptoms can continue to carry out child custody agreements. However, the rotational worker must otherwise continue their modified form of self-isolation for 14 days.

What if my medical provider still won't accept me because I have been outside Nova Scotia, PEI or Newfoundland and Labrador in the past 14-days?

We are making medical providers aware of this policy so they know that you are allowed to seek their services. If a medical provider refuses you services, you can contact their association for guidance.

Why can I only see regulated health professionals?

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.

TESTING**Is COVID-19 testing mandatory for rotational workers?**

Yes, rotational workers who have no symptoms must get tested on day 1 or 2 and on day 6, 7 or 8 of their modified self-isolation.

Does a negative test result mean a rotational worker can stop self-isolation?

No, rotational workers must complete the full 14 days of their modified form of self-isolation, even if they have negative test results.

Why is testing mandatory if rotational workers still have to self-isolate?

Given the frequency of rotational workers' travel in and out of Atlantic Canada, this testing is an added layer of protection for these workers, their families, and their communities because we know that COVID-19 can be spread, even without symptoms.

Why does the testing have to be on day 1 or 2 and on day 6, 7 or 8?

A test on day 1 or 2 of a rotational worker's modified self-isolation minimizes the risk of transmitting the virus unknowingly if they are infectious when they arrive home. A negative result from a test done on day 6, 7 or 8 means they are likely not infectious to others at the time of that test. This timing is late enough to increase the chances of detecting the virus if the worker was exposed while away, and still early enough to isolate household contacts before they spread the virus to others.

Does a negative test guarantee the rotational worker does not have COVID-19?

No. It means they are likely not infectious to others at the time of the test. That is why rotational workers must continue their modified self-isolation.

Have there been any cases of COVID-19 among rotational workers in Nova Scotia?

Yes there have been, and as cases continue to rise in the rest of Canada, it becomes more likely this will happen more frequently.

Will this testing ensure we catch all positive cases among rotational workers?

It is voluntary testing and it is just one test during their 14-day self-isolation. We cannot expect to identify every case through this testing. However, it increases our chances of identifying cases early, before they have time to spread.

Why won't you do a testing protocol like Newfoundland so these workers don't have to self-isolate or can have a shorter isolation?

Testing in Newfoundland does not allow rotational workers to stop isolating. They must self-isolate completely before and after being tested. If they are tested on day 7 or later and the result is negative, they can start a modified form of self-isolation, similar to Nova Scotia's. There are some other requirements as well. You could seek more information from their provincial government.

If a rotational worker gets a negative test before returning to Nova Scotia, can they skip the tests when they return?

No, the tests must be done during the rotational worker's modified self-isolation in Nova Scotia. This is because even if a worker gets tested before arriving home, that test may have been too early in the virus's incubation period to detect it or the worker could still become infected during travel.

How does a rotational worker book a test?

Rotational workers should complete the [COVID-19 self-assessment](#) and choose the asymptomatic and rotational worker options. Then the Nova Scotia Health Authority will call them to book an appointment. Do not call 811 to book a test unless you cannot access the online self-assessment.

Where should a rotational worker get tested? Can they go to a pop-up or drop-in site?

Rotational workers should not go to a pop-up or drop-in site. They must be tested at a primary assessment centre, but they should not go to one of these centres without an appointment.

Is a rotational worker allowed to break self-isolation to go to a testing site?

Yes, they 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.

Can rotational workers take public transportation to a testing site?

Rotational workers 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.

Is there a cost to rotational workers to get tested?

No.

Can exempt or specialized workers get this testing?

No. This testing is only for rotational workers at this time. As the pandemic evolves, our testing strategy also evolves. If there are future changes, they will be announced publicly.

Can a member of a rotational workers' household get this testing as well?

No, but if there is a pop-up site near them, they can get tested there. The test at a pop-up site is not the same kind of test as people get at a primary assessment centre and it does not have the same level of accuracy. But it does give some indication of whether COVID-19 is present.

What should a rotational worker do if they develop symptoms before or after their asymptomatic test?

The worker should immediately self-isolate completely (no contact with others in their household) and complete the [COVID-19 self-assessment](#). If they cannot complete the assessment online, they can call 811.

What are the consequences if you don't do the testing?

Audits will be 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.