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*April 9, 2020*

*Details are subject to change following the Premier's Daily Updates*

To Our Valued Stakeholders:

In an effort to address the high volume of TIR stakeholder requests for information, the department has developed a FAQ document to address some of the most pressing COVID-19 related questions that have been asked of TIR officials by our stakeholders.

To ensure you are kept up to date, we will be sending you updated information, including helpful information from the Department of Business, weekly on Friday afternoons. Know that we value your inquiries, comments and concerns and will reach out to each of you who have taken the time to contact us. We appreciate your patience during this unprecedented time.

## **Trucking and Transportation**

### **As a trucker, am I allowed to enter and re-enter the province?**

Yes. Workers who are essential to the movement of people and goods across provincial borders are exempt from the requirement to self-isolate. Healthy workers in the trade and transportation sector moving goods and people include truck drivers.

### **What should people expect at checkpoints?**

The goal at our borders is to ensure people entering Nova Scotia know there is a state of emergency and that they need to self-isolate for 14 days. There are some exceptions, such as healthy individuals who cross the border on a regular, ongoing basis for work.

Inspection staff are stationed at all border crossings – whether land, sea or air – and are stopping non-commercial traffic to inform and hand out information. They are not tracking individuals or preventing people from entering who agree to comply with the direction to self-isolate.

### **As a truck driver, am I also exempt from social distance requirements ordered by the Health Protection Act order?**

Although exempt from self-isolation and self-quarantine, truckers must still practice social distancing of 2m (6ft) to the best of their ability. They must also closely self-monitor, and must self-isolate or self-quarantine should they exhibit any COVID-19 symptoms. Those include the onset of cough, fever, or shortness of breath.

**Restaurants are restricted to take-out and delivery orders only. This provides a problem for truckers who need places to eat and access to restrooms. There may be only drive-thru service, which is not practical for rigs. What is being done to address this?**

We know this causes a challenge for truckers. We encourage the restaurant industry and the trucking association to work together on improving access to food and rest rooms where possible. In the meantime, it is important to note that grocery stores, which have prepared food counters, and gas stations, with restroom facilities, are open.

On April 2, Restaurant Brands International - owner of Tim Horton's, Burger King - wrote the Premier committing to increase the level of service to truckers. As of April 3, more than 460 Tim Hortons restaurants along Canadian highways will be open to truck drivers to provide food and drink service at the counter. Clean washrooms – which are sanitized at least every 15 minutes – will be open.

### **Is government looking at lifting spring weight restrictions to bring in essential goods?**

Weight restrictions remain in place. Industry can apply for special move permits at: <https://novascotia.ca/sns/access/drivers/special-move-permits.asp>. Permits are reviewed on a case-by-case basis, but contractors must present a compelling case. Lifting the restrictions can harm road infrastructure and so an applicant would have to show that lifting the restriction would benefit the provincial response to COVID-19 health emergency.

### **Government just announced \$8.9 million in fee deferrals from 10 departments. What fees are being deferred by TIR?**

As part of government's COVID-19 response, motor carrier renewal fees will be deferred through until Fall 2020. The deferrals will allow carriers to defer about \$185,000 through this challenging time. Government is also deferring fees across government totalling almost \$9 million. The bus industry in Nova Scotia like many other industries is struggling with the economic challenges created by COVID-19.

## **Construction Industry**

### **Can job sites have more than 5 people on-site, but not more than 5 in one immediate area?**

Yes. Job sites that have the physical size to accommodate the 2m (6ft) social distancing requirement found in Clause 7 of the Order may continue to operate. There may be portions of an otherwise large site, however, that cannot accommodate social distancing (e.g., small enclosed spaces). In those situations, employers/employees must find alternate ways to get the work completed. If this workflow and access into smaller spaces cannot be done in accordance with Occupational Health and Safety requirements, because Dr. Strang's Order takes precedence as per the *Health Protection Act*, the work cannot be completed.

For accurate, up-to-date information during this is an evolving situation and all contractors should monitor: <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus>

### **Can the 5-person group rule be explained in terms of how it pertains to construction specifically?**

Construction sites are required to abide by the social distancing requirement of 2m (6ft) and other public health protocols. Numbers should be limited to 5 in lunchrooms, meeting rooms,

mechanical or electrical rooms or any other space. The 5-person limit set out in Clause 8 applies in circumstances where social distancing cannot be achieved given the physical size limitations of some workplaces. The exemption for “construction sites” in Clause 9 is a clarification that, because construction sites are likely to be large enough to accommodate social distancing, the requirement to limit site presence to only 5 people does not apply.

**Does the 5-person rule extend to construction offices?**

Yes. Construction offices are not “construction sites” so they must implement social distancing and, if this is not possible given the physical size of the office space, no more than 5 people may be in the construction offices at one time.

**Does the 2m (6 ft) rule apply to construction workers? If so, how do they work within 2m (6ft) of each other? Is a N95 mask sufficient? Other PPE requirements?**

Yes. Construction workers are expected to comply with the social distancing requirements of 2m (6ft). For example, working in a confined space. In these situations, employers/employees must find alternate ways to get the work completed. Dr. Strang’s order does not stipulate the use of Personal Protective Equipment (“PPE”) and it does not allow the use of PPE to overcome the requirement to maintain the 2m (6ft).

**Do the interprovincial rules apply to construction workers (14-day isolation)?**

Yes. Construction workers must comply with the 14-day isolation requirement set out in Dr. Strang’s Order. There are some limited exceptions to this requirement. The exception is as follows:

Exception: If they are healthy (i.e., do not have COVID-19, either presumptive or confirmed) and they live outside the province and have to regularly travel back and forth across the Nova Scotia border to get to and from their construction work, they are exempted from the requirement to self-isolate or self-quarantine. An example of such an employee would be the construction worker who lives in Sackville, New Brunswick but who is working on a construction site in Amherst, necessitating regular travel across the border.

**Which government department is administering provincial border checks and who is the contact person for further questions as they arise?**

The border checks process is a multi-department effort. The contact person if further questions arise is Orlando Fraser, Director of Conservation Officer Service, 902-798-7914.

**Are workers who have travelled outside of the country exempt from self-isolation requirements if they are healthy?**

No. Anyone who has travelled outside the country, regardless of what sector they work in, must self-isolate on their return to Canada.

**What if they are currently travelling between the US and Canada to access a job site?**

If a construction worker has returned to Canada from the USA, he or she must be returning via air or via the land borders with the USA at some other location in Canada. As a result, he or she must self-isolate as per the requirement in s.3.1. The exemption for healthy workers crossing

the land border into Nova Scotia set out in Clause 4(b.) and described above is only for those who work in Nova Scotia and who have to regularly travel across the land border to get home.

**Can two workers share a motel room, when working away from their home?**

As long as the motel room can accommodate the social distancing requirement of 2m (6ft), the is acceptable.

**Can two or more workers travel in the same vehicle? This is frequent occurrence for safety, cost control, etc.**

Yes. Two or more workers can travel in the same vehicle, but they must ensure social distancing of 2m (6f) to the greatest extent possible. If people live together and also work together, they are allowed to travel together, as long as they are healthy and showing no symptoms. Trucks with full, or near-full, occupancy are not acceptable.

**What is the protocol for the 2 scenarios below:**

- a) **Staff member is being tested (they are in isolation now) but has not been in contact with a known confirmed case, they have not travelled anywhere etc. Are firms required to communicate with co-workers or wait until case is confirmed? What can be communicated?**

The privacy of an individual is to be respected. The duty of the employer is to manage any hazards as they are identified, keeping the confidentiality of individual workers.

- b) **Spouse of worker tested positive, should the worker stay home? Do we communicate this out or wait until tests of the “worker” are received?**

The privacy of an individual is to be respected. The duty of the employer is to manage any hazards as they are identified, keeping the confidentiality of individual workers.

**Vehicle Licencing, Registration and Inspection**

**How many companies will benefit from the fee deferral to motor carriers announced April 9?**

This pandemic is having unprecedented impacts on our small businesses. By deferring some business fees due to government, we wanted to provide some relief to Nova Scotia businesses.

About 80 companies will benefit.

**How much do annual licence renewal fees bring into the Province?**

Annual licencing fees total \$185,000

**Will companies have to pay those fees once the pandemic is over?**

Yes. The fees are not waived; they are simply deferred. Carriers can continue to send their renewal documentation to the UARB as usual – but without the fees enclosed. Invoices for fees will be issued later this fall.

## **What is being done to support and ease the burden on businesses who need to renew vehicle licences, inspections and registration with Access Centres closed for the foreseeable future?**

Recognizing that many people are concerned about upcoming deadlines for Registry of Motor Vehicle permits, registrations and renewals. The Government has introduced the following extensions until further notice:

- Vehicle registrations with a December 31, 2019 expiry and thereafter are valid until August 31. This Includes all vehicle types, as well as off highway vehicles, motorcycles and trailers
- All temporary permits with a March 2020 expiry or thereafter are valid until August 31

Nova Scotians can call the provincial contact centre with urgent enquiries related to registry of motor vehicle transactions not addressed by the above extensions 1-800-670-4357. Some transactions that you may consider to be urgent based on time sensitivity include:

- vehicle transfers where you do not have a previous licence plate
- replacement documents (i.e. lost your driver licence card)
- restoration of driving privileges
- International Registration Plan (IRP) transactions
- Motor vehicle dealer transactions
- Motor Vehicle Inspection Station (MVI) transactions

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WE HOPE WILL BE HELPFUL**

### **WORKER EMERGENCY BRIDGE FUND AND SMALL BUSINESS IMPACT GRANT**

Applications for the two programs announced Thursday, April 2, will be available online by April 10th, at <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/#support>.

The Department of Business is committed to getting money into the hands of our small businesses and workers as quickly as possible. Dalhousie University has agreed to help us with that. All funds will be dispersed by the end of April.

### **COVID-19 IN THE WORKPLACE**

All positive cases of COVID-19 are reported to Public Health through the lab testing processes. Anyone with a confirmed case of COVID-19 will be contacted by Public Health and they will work to determine who their close contacts are. If co-workers are identified as close contacts, Public Health will follow up with those individuals, typically within 24 hours, with instructions to self isolate. All other employees should continue to practice good hand hygiene and use cough and sneeze etiquette. Physical distance of 2m (6ft) must be maintained in the workplace.

There is no requirement for businesses to close if an employee has tested positive.

Businesses that are open must take the following steps to keep employees and customers healthy:

- Maintain a 2m (6ft) distance among employees and customers
- Clean and disinfect workplaces a minimum of twice a day, or as required
- Employees must follow proper hand-washing and other hygiene guidelines

To clean and disinfect workspaces, wash with soapy water first. Then disinfect using household cleaning products, following the directions on the label, or a solution of 1-part bleach to 9-parts water. Disinfect phones, remotes, computers, and other handheld devices with 70% alcohol or wipes.

### **PRODUCTIVITY INNOVATION VOUCHER PROGRAM**

NSBI is taking applications for the Productivity Innovation Program. The program helps small and medium sized companies access direct assistance to help make their business more productive and innovative.

The program helps businesses find expertise within post-secondary institutions to:

- Improve productivity
- Develop a new product, service, or process; and
- Create growth

More information on the program and how to apply is available online at:

<https://www.novascotiabusiness.com/export/programs-services/productivity-and-innovation-voucher-program>

### **EMPLOYER ASSESSMENT TOOL**

The Employer Assessment tool has proved to be a popular resource for businesses looking to find out if they are complying with the Public Health order. Since it was posted online on March 30, it has been visited 8,316 times, with 7,116, or 86.73% of respondents completing the assessment.

Respondents included 2,618 businesses exempt from the Public Health order, 2,491 businesses who are permitted to operate if they are able to practice the social distancing measures, 769 employers who chose “other”, 390 from the food service industry, 279 from regulated health professions, 202 from unregulated health professions.

Employer Assessment Tool is located here:

<https://covid19-employer-assessment.novascotia.ca/en>

**FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL BUSINESS SUPPORT PROGRAMS**

<b>Program</b>	<b>Terms</b>	<b>Eligibility</b>	<b>Amounts</b>
Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS)	75% of salaries (up to 3 mths) for qualifying businesses, retroactive to March 15, 2020	Individuals, corps, partnerships and NFP – all sectors (except public sector entities) Must be able to demonstrate 30% or more drop in revenues	Max \$847/week per employee
Wage subsidy 10%	Organizations that do not qualify for the CEWS may qualify for the 10% wage subsidy (March 18 – June 19, 2020)	Individuals, CCPC, partnerships and NFP- all sectors (except trusts)	Max \$1375/employee Max \$25,000/employer
Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA)	Interest free loan (repay Dec/22)	paid salaries of \$50,000-\$1 million	up to \$40,000 (\$10,000 potentially forgivable)
Business Credit Availability Program (BCAP) for SMEs 1) Loan Guarantees 2) Co-Lending Program	BDC/EDC working with financial institutions to issue new operating credit and cash flow term loans of up to \$6.25 million to SMEs.	All credit-worthy businesses with viable business models whose activities fall within the mandate of BDC or EDC.	No limits
SBLGP – Credit Unions	90% provincial guarantee on Term loans (10yrs) 75% provincial guarantee on lines of credit (7yrs)	NS owned companies (exclude business with 50%+ alcohol sales)	Up to \$500,000 cumulative loan cap per client
SBLGP- COVID Response Stream	100% provincial guarantee on Term loans/lines of credit	NS owned companies (exclude business with 50%+ alcohol sales)	Up to \$100,000 (loan cap \$500,000 /client)
Small Business Impact Grant	Grant -cash payment to businesses affected by Health order	Corps, NFP, social enterprises	Up to \$5,000 per organization

**ADJUSTING TO A NEW REALITY**

As we continue under the Public Health orders, with no date as to when restrictions will begin to loosen, many businesses have started to adjust their business model. If you know of a

business that has pivoted or adjusted their operations and is doing something new and innovative, we would love to hear about it and possibly feature it in upcoming newsletters. You can send an email to [Nicole.Hersey@novascotia.ca](mailto:Nicole.Hersey@novascotia.ca)

### **NOVA SCOTIA TENDER NOTICES**

Are you a business that can supply products and service in support of Nova Scotia's response to COVID-19? If so, the Department of Business wants to hear from you.

We are also interested in hearing from innovative businesses or organizations that have a solution for:

- virtual mental health services for vulnerable people or those living in remote communities
- supply chain resiliency monitoring
- financial planning and advising for small businesses that can be delivered online at low-cost, including advice on how to apply for relief programs
- other ideas or products that could help Nova Scotians

A procurement portal has been developed and includes a list of products and services we're looking for. For more information, visit: <https://procurement.novascotia.ca/ns-tenders.aspx>

### **PROVINCIAL SUPPORTS FOR SMALL BUSINESSES**

The provincial government has announced several initiatives to address cash flow and access to credit for small and medium sized businesses in Nova Scotia:

- Payment deferrals until June 30 on all government loans, including those under the Farm Loan Board, Fisheries and Aquaculture Loan Board, Jobs Fund, Nova Scotia Business Fund, Municipal Finance Corp. and Housing Nova Scotia.
- Fees, including business renewal fees and workers compensation premiums, will be deferred. A list of applicable fees will be posted online.
- Changes to the Small Business Loan Guarantee Program, administered through 15 provincial Credit Unions, include deferring principal and interest payments until June 30.
- Other changes to the Small Business Loan Guarantee Program include enhancing the program to make it easier for businesses to access credit up to \$500,000. Other changes to this program will be announced soon.

### **USEFUL RESOURCES**

Nova Scotians can find accurate, up-to-date information, handwashing posters and fact sheets at <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus> .

An email address for COVID-19 media inquiries has been set up: [COVID19media@novascotia.ca](mailto:COVID19media@novascotia.ca)

Daily updates are livestreamed at 3 p.m. on <https://novascotia.ca/stayinformed/webcast> , @nsgov Facebook and YouTube channels.

Follow the Department of Business on Twitter - @NS\_DoB

Follow the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal - @NS\_TIR

Follow Nova Scotia government on Instagram - nsgov

To watch today's (and previous) live webcasts visit:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLwLZ9YtgHtLCpATUVFKVf72xyF103eHaE>

Government of Canada: <https://canada.ca/coronavirus>

Government of Canada toll-free information line 1-833-784-4397

Government Business Navigators: More information on this service is available <https://novascotia.ca/regulatoryopportunity/business-navigators.asp>. Navigators are available by calling or [1-844-628-7347](tel:1-844-628-7347) , [902-424-4475](tel:902-424-4475) Monday through Friday 8am to 5pm or by email [BusNavigation@novascotia.ca](mailto:BusNavigation@novascotia.ca)

## **SUMMARY OF PROVINCIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Refer to [novascotia.ca/news](https://novascotia.ca/news) for full details.

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| April 9  | Announcement includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Deferral of more than 480 fees by 10 departments totalling \$8.9 million</li><li>• Includes deferral of Motor Carrier Licence renewals</li></ul>   |
| April 7  | Announcement includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Province records its first death from COVID-19</li></ul>   |
| April 6  | Announcement includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Travel is removed from testing requirements</li><li>• Testing Lab has moved to round-the-clock operations</li></ul>  |
| April 2  | State of Emergency is extended to April 19, 2020<br>Announcement includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• COVID-19 Worker Emergency Bridge - \$20 million</li><li>• Small Business COVID-19 Impact Grant - \$20 million</li><li>• Map and graphs of COVID-19 test results is now online at <a href="https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/data">https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/data</a></li></ul> |
| March 30 | Announcement includes:  |

- Schools closed until May 1. Online and paper-based learning strategies are being developed to support student learning
  - Employer Assessment Tool to help businesses and non-profits clarify if they can remain open and how to comply with public health providers and workplace safety requirements added online.
- March 27      Announcement includes:
- Support for landlords who enter into a rent deferral agreement with their commercial tenants
  - Restaurants can now include alcohol in their take-out and delivery sales
  - Government has purchased 800 iPads for use in long term care facilities
- March 26      Announcement includes:
- COVID testing is being expanded to include:
    - Anyone referred by 811 to an assessment centre
    - All close contacts of people who test positive
    - People in hospital that meet the criteria for testing
  - Reservations for 2020 camping season are on hold until further notice
  - Open fires for any purpose in woods or within 305 metres of woods in any part of the province are banned until May 15
- March 24      Announcement includes:
- Measures to strengthen the health system, help Nova Scotians dealing with COVID-19
  - Access Centres and Registry of Motor Vehicle Offices to resume operations in a scaled back, limited contact business model.
  - Regulated health professions can stay open for emergency or urgent care or to provide virtual care as long as they meet social distancing requirements
  - Non-regulated health professions must close (with exception of podiatrists)
- March 22      State of Emergency declared
- March 21      Announcement includes:
- Dentists can no longer practice dentistry in their offices unless deemed necessary to perform an emergency dental procedure
- March 18      Announcement regarding Personal Services and fitness establishment closures
- includes hair salons, barbershops, spas, nail salons, body art establishments, gyms
- March 17      No public gatherings of more than 50 people

Announcement includes:

- Access Nova Scotia closed
- Restaurants- only take-out and delivery permitted
- Drinking establishments, winery and distillery tasting rooms and craft taprooms closed
- Private liquor store permitted to be open, and craft breweries, wineries and distilleries can still sell storefront

March 15

Announcement includes:

- Long-term care closed effective immediately
- Public schools and regulated childcare closed
- Social distancing – 2 meters/6 feet, gatherings of less than 150 or much smaller if possible