



COVID-19 FAQs for Construction

Construction Association of Nova Scotia | Updated March 27, 2020

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Q: 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.

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

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

Construction sites are required 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.

Q: 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.

Q: Does the 2 m rule apply to construction workers? If so, how do they work within 2 m 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).

Q: 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.

Q: 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.

Q: 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.

Q: 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.

Q: 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.

Q: 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.

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

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.

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.

Q: Will the Government have a financial package specific for the construction industry?

Financial aid for all sectors is being considered and reviewed. Information will be forthcoming as soon as the details of the federal aid package are known.

Q: Will virtual Statutory Declarations be accepted in Nova Scotia as is now being done in Ontario?

We will be having conversations with Justice to discuss stat decs and what we can accept.

Q: Will electronic bonds be accepted and starting when?

Bid bonding will be accepted electronically and we are currently working out details regarding performance bonding.