

Protocol for COVID-19 vaccination of international seafarers while in Nova Scotia – July 30, 2021

***This protocol does not replace any federal requirements**

In Canada, international seafarers are considered workers in the marine transportation sector who are essential for the movement of goods by vessel during the COVID-19 pandemic and are therefore exempt from federal isolation and testing requirements if asymptomatic, with certain conditions.

When in Nova Scotia there are additional precautions that must be taken by unvaccinated and partially vaccinated seafarers and other categories of exempted travellers under the Nova Scotia [COVID-19 Protocol for Exempt Travelers](#).

Support for COVID-19 vaccinations and testing

Seafarers are encouraged to access vaccine while in Nova Scotia as part of the execution of their duties. Ships are not to be routed to Nova Scotia for the sole purpose of accessing vaccine.

The seafarers are required to take a rapid COVID-19 test* the day of their vaccine appointment, prior to attending a community vaccine clinic or pharmacy. These tests will be provided to crew by the Ship's Agent via the Nova Scotia Health Authority or the Mission to Seafarers Halifax.

The tests involve a bilateral shallow nasal swab and produce results in 15 minutes. These tests are simple to use and instructions will be provided within the test kit.

If the test produces a negative result, the seafarer can proceed to a community vaccine clinic or pharmacy as planned. If the test produces a positive result, the individual should isolate immediately, notify their superior and seek a PCR test at a Nova Scotia Health primary assessment centre to confirm the result. Details on how to access confirmatory testing can be found here: nshealth.ca/visit-covid-19-testing-site.

Precautions when in Nova Scotia

When seafarers are in Nova Scotia, they can go to medical appointments, including vaccine appointments, but they **must**:

- Travel directly to the location where the exempted activity takes place and not use public transportation
- Have no close contact with anyone, except as required by the nature of the exempted activity
- Wear a [non-medical mask in any indoor public space](#) or when they are in close contact (less than 2 metres/6 feet) outside of their accommodation.
- Monitor their health closely and if they start to feel sick, self-isolate and seek a COVID-19 test. Details on accessing testing can be found here: nshealth.ca/visit-covid-19-testing-site

Since individuals are considered exempt to obtain vaccine, they are able to answer “no” to screening question about the requirement to self-isolation including travel. This does not apply to those with symptoms or close contact to a case in the last 14 days.

Process

There are 2 options for the seafarers to seek vaccination:

1. Until August 15, 2021, most [community clinics](#) have drop-in capacity. Confirmation of location and availability can be found here: <https://www.nshealth.ca/drop-in-vaccine-clinics>. Provided the requirements of this guidance document have been met, the seafarers can proceed directly to one of these locations for vaccination. Identification will be required.
2. The [Pharmacy Association of Nova Scotia \(PANS\)](#) has agreed to work with the Mission to Seafarers to support access to vaccine in participating pharmacies when seafarers are in Nova Scotia. The Mission to

Seafarers will be the point of contact of both the ship and PANS and responsible to ensure the ship is aware of the requirements of this protocol.

To support the success of this option, PANS will require as much notice as possible with the following information:

- date of arrival and departure
- number and names to be vaccinated
- for second shot, interval/manufacture of first shot
- need for translation services
- confirmation that a rapid test will be completed
- completion of consent - consent can be found at:
http://policy.nshealth.ca/Site_Published/covid19/document_render.aspx?documentRender.IdType=6&documentRender.GenericField=&documentRender.Id=84044

Early notice will increase the likelihood of success by allowing the identification of the closest available option and ensure there is enough vaccine available.

The logistics required to have seafarers vaccinated is outside of the scope of this process and is the responsibility of the ship, shipping company, agent or other entity.

The contact for PANS is as follows:

Pharmacy Association of Nova Scotia
Allison Bodnar, Chief Executive Officer
238A Brownlow Ave #210, Dartmouth, NS B3B 2B4
Phone: (902) 422-9583
pans@pans.ns.ca

*Note individuals who have had a confirmed COVID-19 infection within the past 90 days are not recommended to take a test due to the higher chance it may produce a false positive result.