

## Nova Scotia Health COVID-19 Protocols for a Safe Recovery

Last Updated: June 22, 2022

Nova Scotia Health is continually tracking and evaluating internal data to guide the most appropriate level of protective measures required in each zone to reduce the risk of introduction and spread of COVID-19 in our facilities. These measures to protect our patients, staff and doctors include the use of personal protective equipment for our team members; masks for patients, Essential Care Partners (family support persons and care givers); testing of team members; screening of both team members and Essential Care Partners; vaccination requirements for team members; safe visitation and other practices in both inpatient and outpatient services; and guidance for meetings, gatherings and transportation. Zones are assigned a risk level from Tier1(low risk) to Tier4 (extreme risk) based on the following indicators specific to each zone:

**Community risk level** – the daily average percentage of positive PCR COVID-19 tests over the last two weeks.

**COVID-19 inpatients** – the average daily total number of patients receiving care for COVID-19 in designated COVID-19 units/patient care area, including those in ICU, over the last 14 days.

**New COVID admissions, any unit** – the average daily number of patients admitted who have COVID-19, whether or not COVID-19 is the primary reason for admission, over the last 14 days.

**Total active COVID-19 hospitalizations** – the average daily total number of all patients in hospital who were admitted with COVID-19 and as well as all patients who acquired COVID-19 in hospital (removed at 21 days after their positive COVID-19 test), over the last two weeks.

**Health Care Team Members off due to COVID-19 infection or exposure** – the daily average number and percentage of healthcare staff absent due to COVID-19, over the last two weeks.

**Health Care Team Member Vaccination Rate** – the percentage of eligible nursing and healthcare staff who are fully vaccinated (three doses with the third administered more than 14 days prior).

Criteria for Each Tier Level/Risk Phase

CRITERIA For Each Tier Level/Risk Phase	Tier 1 Low Risk: Almost Normal Pre-COVID				Tier 2 Moderate Risk				Tier 3 High Risk				Tier 4 Extreme Risk			
	CZ	EZ	WZ	NZ	CZ	EZ	WZ	NZ	CZ	EZ	WZ	NZ	CZ	EZ	WZ	NZ
Community risk level (% positivity), 14 day moving average	<10%				10-19%				20-29%				≥30%			
COVID inpatients (COVID units and critical care)	≤5	≤2	≤1	≤1	≤15	≤3	≤2	≤2	≤25	≤6	<5	<5	>25	>6	≥5	≥5
New COVID admissions any unit, 7 day moving daily average	<2	<2	<1.8	<1.6	2-3.3	2-2.6	1.8-2.2	1.6-1.9	3.4-5.7	2.7-3	2.2-3.3	2-3	>5.7	>3	>3.3	>3
Total active COVID hospitalizations, including outbreak (inside 21 days of +PCR)	<80	<32	<30	<30	80-99	33-62	30-34	30-34	100-130	63-85	35-40	35-40	>130	>85	>40	>40
Nursing and HC staff off due to COVID infection or exposure (as %)	<.5	<.5	<.5	<.5	.5-1.2	.5-1.4	.5-1.9	.5-2.1	1.3-2.25	1.5-2.5	2-2.3	2.2-2.75	>2.25	>2.5	>2.3	>2.75
Health care risk: Proportion of eligible health care workers fully vaccinated (3 doses with 3 <sup>rd</sup> administered >14 days)	≥90%	≥90%	≥90%	≥90%	80 - 89%	80 - 89%	80 - 89%	80 - 89%	75 - 79%	75 - 79%	75 - 79%	75 - 79%	<75%	<75%	<75%	<75%

PPE	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4
Eye protection	Based on point of care risk assessment	Eye Protection required in clinical areas if HCW not fully vaccinated (3 doses)	Eye Protection required in clinical areas if HCW not fully vaccinated (3 doses)	Eye Protection required in clinical areas regardless of vaccination status
Masks (inpatient settings): Essential care partners (Family support persons and caregivers), inpatients where possible	Medical or cloth mask required when outside of the patient bed space or in the presence of a health care worker	Medical mask required when outside of the patient bed space or in the presence of a health care worker	Medical mask required when outside of the patient bed space or in the presence of a health care worker	Medical mask required when outside of the patient bed space or in the presence of a health care worker
Masks (ambulatory settings) Patients, essential care partners and support persons	Required (medical or cloth)	Required (medical)	Required (medical)	Required (medical)
Masks for health care workers <i>*see below regarding break rooms and meeting spaces</i>	Required (medical)	Required (medical)	Required (medical)	Required (medical)
Code Blue	Don airborne precautions based on most recent <a href="#">COVID-19 Risk Assessment: All NSHA Patients</a> or based on Point of Care Risk Assessment (PCRA). Some patients will require <a href="#">Airborne Precautions</a> for reasons other than COVID.	Don airborne precautions based on most recent <a href="#">COVID-19 Risk Assessment: All NSHA Patients</a> or based on Point of Care Risk Assessment (PCRA). Some patients will require <a href="#">Airborne Precautions</a> for reasons other than COVID.	Don airborne precautions based on most recent <a href="#">COVID-19 Risk Assessment: All NSHA Patients</a> or based on Point of Care Risk Assessment (PCRA). Some patients will require <a href="#">Airborne Precautions</a> for reasons other than COVID.	Don airborne precautions for all CODES requiring airway management

<b>TESTING</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Tier 3</b>	<b>Tier 4</b>
Admission Testing (surveillance)	Based on admission risk assessment <a href="#">COVID-19 Risk Assessment: All NSHA Patients</a>	Based on admission risk assessment <a href="#">COVID-19 Risk Assessment: All NSHA Patients</a>	Required for all admissions	Required for all admissions
Perioperative Testing (risk mitigation) & outpatient pre-AGMP testing	Based on pre-procedure risk assessment	Based on pre-procedure risk assessment.	Required for all AGMPs including surgical procedures requiring general anesthetic	Required for all AGMPs including surgical procedures requiring general anesthetic
Inpatient pre-AGMP	Based on screening risk assessment	Based on screening riskassessment	Based on screening riskassessment	Required for all AGMPs  <a href="#">Management of Hospitalized Patients Requiring an AGMP in a Tier 4 - Extreme Risk Zone</a>

<b>SCREENING</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Tier 3</b>	<b>Tier 4</b>
Entry screening patients/Essential Care Partner (Family support person and caregivers): includes ambulatory settings where there is no separate employee entrance	Mask (medical or cloth) required for entry, active screening of symptoms/exposure risk with facility door screeners Separate entrances not required for essential care partners and patients	Mask (medical or cloth) required for entry, active screening of symptoms/exposure risk with facility door screeners Separate entrances not required for essential care partners and patients	Medical mask (provided at door) required for entry, active screening of symptoms/exposure risk with facility door screeners Separate entrances where possible for essential care partners and patients	Medical mask (provided at door) required for entry, active screening of symptoms/exposure risk for with facility door screeners Separate entrances where possible for essential care partners and patients
Screening prior to ambulatory visits	Screening questions included with appointment letter. Screening completed by phone within 48h prior to in-person appointment if appointment notification by mail not used	Screening questions included with appointment letter. Screening completed by phone within 48h prior to in-person appointment if appointment notification by mail not used	Screening completed by phone within 48h prior to in-person appointment	Screening completed by phone within 48h prior to in-person appointment

<b>AMBULATORY PRACTICES</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Tier 3</b>	<b>Tier 4</b>
Waiting room	Up to 100% of capacity with medical mask required. Direct patients to exam room as quickly as possible. HCW should ensure patients/Essential Care Partners who are unable to mask are distanced from others.	Up to 100% of capacity with medical mask required. Direct patients to exam room as quickly as possible. HCW should ensure patients/Essential Care Partners who are unable to mask are distanced from others.	50% of capacity with medical mask required. Direct patients to exam room as quickly as possible.	25% of capacity with medical mask required. Direct patients to exam room as quickly as possible.
Telehealth to in-person visitation	In-person and Telehealth when deemed clinically appropriate	In-person and Telehealth when deemed clinically appropriate	Telehealth as required to meet in-person clinic capacity	Telehealth as required to meet in-person clinic capacity
Exam rooms	Support/caregiver permitted as per <a href="#">Staff Guidance: Supporting safe visitation with patients in NS Health Facilities</a>	Support/caregiver permitted as per <a href="#">Staff Guidance: Supporting safe visitation with patients in NS Health Facilities</a>	Support/caregiver permitted as per <a href="#">Staff Guidance: Supporting safe visitation with patients in NS Health Facilities</a>	Support/caregiver permitted as per <a href="#">Staff Guidance: Supporting safe visitation with patients in NS Health Facilities</a>

TEAM MEMBERS FOLLOWING WORK ISOLATION PROTOCOLS REQUIRE EYE PROTECTION IN ADDITION TO MASKING AT ALL TIMES IN ALL TIERS				
MEETINGS/GATHERINGS	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4
In-person meetings, small work team check-ins, educational sessions and huddles in <b>non-clinical areas</b> (including nursing stations and simulation), where patients are not present	Permitted as per room capacity limits. Masking recommended. Food: see below	Up to 50 people, physically distanced (2-metre), masking required. Masks immediately back on after eating/drinking. Consider virtual when possible	Up to 25 people, physically distanced (2-metre), masking required. Masks immediately back on after eating/drinking. Consider virtual when possible.	Up to 10 people, physically distanced (2-metre), masking required at all times. No food or drink permitted. Consider virtual when possible.
Team meetings: unit daily huddles, small work-team check-ins required for direct patient care or critical training, in <b>clinical areas</b>	Permitted up to room/area capacity limits. Masking required	Up to room capacity physically distanced (2-metre), masking required. If 2-metre physical distancing maintained, drinks permitted and masks back on immediately after drinking. No food permitted. Consider virtual when possible.	Up to room capacity physically distanced (2-metre), masking required. If 2-metre physical distancing maintained, drinks permitted and masks back on immediately after drinking. No food permitted. Consider virtual when possible.	Up to 10 people, physically distanced (2-metre), masking and eye protection required at all times. No food or drink permitted. Consider virtual when possible.
Administrative meetings in areas/conference rooms where patient care is not delivered ie (boardrooms, conference spaces)	Permitted as per room capacity limits. Masking recommended. Food: see below	Up to room capacity with physical distancing. If 2-metre physical distancing maintained, food and drink permitted and masks back on immediately after eating or drinking.	Up to room capacity with physical distancing. If 2-metre physical distancing maintained, food and drink permitted and masks back on immediately after eating or drinking.	Up to 10 people, physically distanced (2-metre), masking required at all times. No food or drink permitted. Consider virtual when possible.
Conferences/Meetings hosted by NS Health – including off-site spaces				
Patient groups	Permitted up to room/ area capacity limits. Masking required.	Permitted up to room/ area capacity limits. Masking required.	Up to room capacity, physically distanced (2-metre), masking required. If 2-metre physical distancing maintained, drinks permitted and masks back on immediately after drinking. No food permitted.	Up to room capacity, physically distanced (2-metre), masking required at all times. No food or drink permitted. Consider virtual if possible.

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<b>TEAM MEMBERS FOLLOWING WORK ISOLATION PROTOCOLS REQUIRE EYE PROTECTION IN ADDITION TO MASKING AT ALL TIMES IN ALL TIERS</b>				
<b>MEETINGS/GATHERINGS</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Tier 3</b>	<b>Tier 4</b>
Large meetings of >100	Permitted up to room/areacapacity limits. Masking recommended	Virtual	Virtual	Virtual
Cafeteria seating	Permitted up to room/areacapacity limits. Masking recommended when not eating/drinking	Reduced capacity, 2-metre physical distancing, masks immediately back on after eating/drinking	Reduced capacity, 2-metre physical distancing; immediately masks back on after eating/drinking	Reduced capacity, 2-metre physical distancing; immediately masks back on after eating/drinking
Break rooms	Permitted up to room/areacapacity limits. Masking optional	2-meters apart if not masked. Masks back on immediately after eating/drinking. Stagger breaks to allow distancing	Designated space for eating and drinking, 2-meters apart. Masks back on immediately after eating and drinking. Stagger breaks to allow distancing.	Designated space for eating and drinking. 2-meters apart. Masks back on immediately after eating and drinking. Stagger breaks to allow distancing Mask and eye protection required if shared eating and non-eating space and 2-metre physical distancing cannot be strictly maintained

<b>FOOD</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Tier 3</b>	<b>Tier 4</b>
Meal donations	As per Nutrition & Food Services routine guidelines.	As per Nutrition & Food Services routine guidelines.	Allow commercial foods from established businesses, individually wrapped servings; no homemade or shared foods	Allow commercial foods from established businesses, individually wrapped servings; no homemade or shared foods.
Parties, employee recognition events, etc.	Permitted as per meeting/gathering guidelines in Nova Scotia Health Protocols for a safe Recovery (above).	Follow meeting/gathering guidelines in Nova Scotia Health Protocols for a safe Recovery and meeting/learning with food Guidelines (above).	Virtual only	Virtual only
Meeting/Learning sessions with food	Food allowed (no reaching hands into bags of chips or cookies, etc.); buffet style allowed; Alcohol-Based Hand Rub in meeting rooms mounted on wall near serving line	Food/drink permitted in <b>non-clinical areas</b> if 2-metre physical distance maintained. Masks immediately back on after eating/drinking. <b>No food permitted in clinical areas.</b>	Food/drink permitted in <b>non-clinical areas</b> if 2-metre physical distance maintained. Masks immediately back on after eating/drinking. <b>No food permitted in clinical areas.</b>	No food or drink permitted



<b>ADDITIONAL ON SITE PEOPLE/SERVICES</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Tier 3</b>	<b>Tier 4</b>
Essential care partners (Family support persons and caregivers)	<a href="#"><u>Staff Guidance: Supporting safe visitation with patients in NS Health Facilities</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Staff Guidance: Supporting safe visitation with patients in NS Health Facilities</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Staff Guidance: Supporting safe visitation with patients in NS Health Facilities</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Staff Guidance: Supporting safe visitation with patients in NS Health Facilities</u></a>
Students	As pre-pandemic	<p>Informal job shadowing permitted.</p> <p>Learners from accredited education programs with affiliation with Nova Scotia Health only unless approved by Interprofessional Practice and Learning (IPPL). Learners must follow COVID-19 protocols as set forth by Public Health and carried out within their educational program. Learners must follow all guidance while in NS Health facilities /placements.</p>	<p>No informal job shadowing unless required by a program. Learners from accredited education programs with affiliation with NS Health only unless approved by Interprofessional Practice and Learning (IPPL). Learners must follow COVID-19 protocols as set forth by Public Health and carried out within their educational program. Learners must follow all guidance while in NS Health facilities /placements.</p>	<p>No informal job shadowing. Learners from accredited education programs with affiliation with NS Health only unless approved by Interprofessional Practice and Learning (IPPL). Learners must follow COVID 19 protocols as set forth by Public Health and carried out within their educational program. Learners must follow all guidance while in NS Health facilities /placements.</p>
Volunteers	As per approved Volunteer Services Pandemic Recovery Plan	As per approved Volunteer Services Pandemic Recovery Plan	As per approved Volunteer Services Pandemic Recovery Plan – Volunteer roles with minimal direct patient contact	As per approved Volunteer Services Pandemic Recovery Plan - Volunteer roles with no direct patient contact

## NOVA SCOTIA HEALTH PROTOCOLS FOR A SAFE RECOVERY

ADDITIONAL ON SITE PEOPLE/SERVICES	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4
Contractors (facilities contract workers, building support vendors/ repair personnel for fixed, in-place machinery/ patient care equipment)	Follow Nova Scotia Health facility entry protocols	Planned maintenance & critical/unplanned downtime service. Entry protocols approved by OHSW/IPAC	Critical/unplanned downtime service and preventative maintenance/repair/ installation of equipment required for patient care. Entry protocols approved by OHSW/IPAC	Critical/unplanned downtime service and preventative maintenance/repair/ installation of equipment required for patient care. Entry protocols approved by OHSW/IPAC
Pet therapy	In areas with approved program, not in rooms of patients with suspect or confirmed COVID-19. Masking required for handler.	In areas with approved program, not in rooms of patients with suspect or confirmed COVID-19. Masking required for handler.	No pet therapy, service dogs only.	No pet therapy, service dogs only.

TRANSPORTATION	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4
Elevators	As per normal capacity.	6 per car, masked <a href="#">Elevator Etiquette</a> - 6 people max	6 per car, masked <a href="#">Elevator Etiquette</a> - 6 people max	4 per car, masked <a href="#">Elevator Etiquette</a> - 4 people max
Shuttle buses (employee and patient)	All seats available, masks to be worn at all times. Patient transport permitted	All seats available, masks to be worn at all times. Patient transport permitted	Physical distancing, masks to be worn at all times. No patient transports.	Physical distancing, masks to be worn at all times. No patient transports.

[Nova Scotia Health COVID-19 Protocols for a Safe Recovery - Tier Designation \(Map\)](#)