
Government of

Department of Health & Wellness



PO Box 2000
Charlottetown
Prince Edward Island
C1A 7N8

Telephone: (902) 368-4996
Fax: (902) 620-3354
Internet: princeedwardisland.ca

To: Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, and Administrators

From: Dr. Heather Morrison, CPHO

Date: October 1, 2021 (Replaces July 18, 2021)

Subject: Updated Testing Guidance for COVID-19

CC: Dr. Kristen Mead, Medical Director, Provincial Laboratory Services

The following provides CURRENT AND **NEW or updated CRITERIA (in bold)** for testing for COVID-19 for both routine and stat purposes. See Appendix A (distributed with April 20th memo) for additional information on access to testing, processes, and stat testing.

*The Testing Memo does not address all requirements for self-isolation. For the most up-to-date direction on self-isolation requirements and exemptions, please consult relevant information on the Government of PEI COVID-19 website or sector specific guidance, as appropriate.

For further clarity on updated testing and isolation for workers, including health care workers and rotational workers, please visit: <https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/service/travelling-workers>

Emergency Department

- Any person presenting with new onset of fever without an alternative explanation or new or worsening cough, sore throat, rhinitis, marked fatigue, shortness of breath, chills, headache, myalgia, or acute loss of sense of smell or taste without an alternative explanation should be tested.
- Patients on self-isolation and undergoing a surgical procedure that requires or may require general anesthetic.

Community Clinics

- Any person presenting with new onset of fever without an alternative explanation or new or worsening cough, sore throat, rhinitis, marked fatigue, shortness of breath, chills, headache, myalgia, or acute loss of sense of smell or taste without an alternative explanation should be tested.

- Preliminary positives on a COVID-19 point of care test should be re-tested/confirmed with a RT-PCR test.
- Any person who was in close contact with (1) a symptomatic case starting 48 hours prior to the case developing symptoms or (2) a laboratory confirmed asymptomatic case starting 48 hours prior to the day their positive specimen was collected:
 - **If NOT fully vaccinated: test at 0-1, 4-6, and 9-11 days after their last exposure to the case;**
 - **If fully vaccinated and NOT a household close contact: test at 0, 3, 6, and 9 days after their last exposure to the case.**
 - **If fully vaccinated and is a household close contact: test at 0-1, 4-6, and 9-11 days after their last exposure to the case.**
- Any unvaccinated or partially vaccinated person who was in casual contact with (1) a symptomatic case starting 48 hours prior to the case developing symptoms or (2) a laboratory confirmed asymptomatic case starting 48 hours prior to the day their positive specimen was collected should be tested at 4-6 days after their last exposure to the case.
- Any unvaccinated or partially vaccinated person who visited a location in Atlantic Canada that is listed for possible COVID-19 exposure at the specified date and time should be tested.
- Unvaccinated and partially vaccinated taxi drivers and ride-share drivers who pick-up fares from the Charlottetown airport, who transport passengers off-Island or who transport passengers to a Cough and Fever clinic or COVID-19 testing site should be tested weekly [Abbott ID Now is acceptable], or more frequently if symptoms occur.
- Unvaccinated and partially vaccinated commercial bus drivers who transport passengers off-Island should be tested weekly [Abbott ID Now is acceptable], or more frequently if symptoms occur.

Clinical judgement remains important in the differential diagnosis and work-up of individuals presenting with symptoms, considering both our local epidemiology and the patient's exposure risks. For instance, seasonal allergies or post-immunization fever may be considered as alternative diagnoses.

Exposure Notification by the COVID Alert App

- Any person who has received an exposure notification from the COVID Alert app should be tested.

Admitted Patients

- Any person hospitalized > 48hrs with influenza-like-illness (ILI; fever without an alternate explanation and new or worsening cough, sore throat, joint pain, muscle aches, fatigue).
- Any person admitted to the ICU with a respiratory symptom.
- Patients that would otherwise be on self-isolation and undergoing a surgical procedure that requires or may require general anesthetic.
- Inpatients at QEH Unit 9, Hillsborough Hospital, Provincial Addiction Treatment Facility, and Prince County Hospital Inpatient Psychiatry Unit should be tested on admission (routine test unless symptomatic; if symptomatic for COVID-19, Stat test).

Health Care Workers (HCW)

- Any current HCW with a new cough and/or fever, sore throat, rhinitis, marked fatigue, shortness of breath, chills, headache, myalgia, or acute loss of sense of smell or taste without an alternative explanation should be tested.
- Any current HCW who is not fully vaccinated arriving to PEI from within Canada – test at 0-1, 4 and 8 days [Abbott ID Now is acceptable for Day 0-1 test]; HCW must test negative prior to start of work isolation. If fully vaccinated, HCW must follow the schedule for fully vaccinated travelers in the Travelers section below. *
- Any current HCW who is not fully vaccinated arriving to PEI from anywhere outside of Canada – test at 0-1 and 8 days [Abbott ID Now is acceptable for Day 0-1 test] and must self-isolate. Note: HCWs arriving to PEI from anywhere outside of Canada are not permitted to work until they finish their 14-day (or 8-day if exempt federally) period of self-isolation. If fully vaccinated, HCW must follow the schedule for fully vaccinated travelers in the Travelers section below.*
- Any current HCW working in long-term care or community care who has traveled out of the province:
 - If unvaccinated or partially vaccinated: test at 0-1 and 8 days [Abbott ID Now is acceptable for both tests]. HCW in long-term care or community care cannot return to work until the period of self-isolation is complete.*
 - **If fully vaccinated:**
 - **And was out of the province for 48 hours or more: test at 0, 4, and 8 days [Abbott ID Now is acceptable]. Must receive a negative test before entering the facility.**
 - **And was out of the province for less than 48 hours: test at 4 and 8 days [Abbott ID Now is acceptable].**
- Weekly testing of **unvaccinated or partially vaccinated** Microbiology staff at the QEH.

Long-term Care/Community Care/Palliative Care Facilities – Residents, Partners in Care, and Designated Visitors

- Test residents of long-term care, community care, or palliative care facility 24-48 hours before transfer/admission to the facility, at 3 to 4 days, and at 10 to 12 days.
- Test unvaccinated and partially vaccinated residents of a long-term care or community care facility on **Day 4 and 8** after attending a wedding, a funeral, or other community-based event or gathering.
- **Residents, partners in care, and designated visitors who have been out of the province for 48 hours or more should be tested at 0, 4, and 8 days [Abbott ID Now is acceptable for Day 0-1 test]. Must receive a negative test before entering the facility. Testing applies regardless of vaccination status.***
- **Residents, partners in care, and designated visitors who have been out of the province for less than 48 hours should be tested at 4 and 8 days. Testing applies regardless of vaccination status.***

Inter-Facility Transfers

- Asymptomatic transfers to other acute care facilities (excluding LTC and CCF) do not require testing at this time, as there is no documented community transmission or reservoir in PEI hospitals.
- Testing can be provided for anyone who requires a test prior to procedure/surgery/ etc. at an out-of-province (OOP) facility.
- Inpatients returning from OOP facilities who were off-Island for ≤ 24 hours require routine testing at 48 hours; test again at 8 days.*
- Inpatients returning from OOP facilities who were off-Island for > 24 hours require routine testing on arrival; test again at 8 days.*

Long-term Care / Community Care Service Providers

- Weekly testing of unvaccinated and partially vaccinated service providers who have direct physical contact with residents (e.g., hairdressers, foot care worker, seamstress, etc.) in long-term care facilities and community care facilities. **Note: This testing is to be performed at the facilities using the rapid antigen test kits.**
- Weekly testing of Partners in Care is NOT required.

Correctional Facility Admissions

- Test (routine testing) on admission to the facility (if had not already tested in past 48 hours) and at 7 days post admission.

Workers with Travel (excluding health care workers; for HCW with travel, see HCW section above)

If fully vaccinated, workers must follow the schedule for fully vaccinated travelers in the Travelers section below.

Rotational Workers (including Truck Drivers)

Rotational workers are those on a set work schedule, with $\geq 50\%$ of their time working outside of PEI, and who are home for 21 days or less.

- PEI residents who are not fully vaccinated and who are rotational workers returning from out of province travel – test at 0-1, 4, and 8 days, if still in the province [Abbott ID Now is acceptable for Day 0-1 test]. Testing frequency resets with each arrival.*
- PEI residents who are not fully vaccinated and who are rotational workers and who are arriving in PEI multiple times each week should be tested at least once every 5 days [Abbott ID Now is acceptable]; deviation of 24 hours is permissible if accessing a clinic is a challenge.*
- If working while in PEI within 8 days of arrival, PEI residents who are not fully vaccinated and who are rotational workers returning from out of province travel and who work in a workplace with 10 or more people – test every other day for the first 8 days, if still in the province. [Abbott ID Now is acceptable for tests on Day 0-1, 4 and 8 (i.e., upon entry and then every other test); tests on Day 2 and 6 must be RT-PCR].*

Other Workers

- Workers (residents and non-residents) who are not fully vaccinated arriving in PEI and who work in a workplace with less than 10 people – test at 0-1, 4, and 8 days, if still in the province [Abbott ID Now is acceptable for Day 0-1 test].*
- Workers (residents and non-residents) who are not fully vaccinated arriving in PEI and who work in a workplace with 10 or more people – test every other day for the first 8 days, if still in the province. [Abbott ID Now is acceptable for tests on Day 0-1, 4 and 8 (i.e., upon entry and then every other test); tests on Day 2 and 6 must be RT-PCR.]*
- Workers (residents and non-residents) who are not fully vaccinated arriving in PEI multiple times each week (even if in PEI for <24 hours) should be tested at least once every 5 days [Abbott ID Now is acceptable]; deviation of 24 hours is permissible if accessing a clinic is a challenge. Testing may be more frequent (i.e., at each arrival in PEI) for individuals working within a Health PEI facility.*

Travelers

- **Fully vaccinated travelers ≥ 12 years of age - test at 0-1 and again between Day 4 and 8 [Abbott ID Now is acceptable].***
- Unvaccinated or partially vaccinated travelers ≥ 12 years of age - test at 0-1 and 8 days [Abbott ID Now acceptable for the Day 0-1 test].*
- Test Temporary Foreign Workers who are isolating at a designated facility at 0-1 and 9-11 days.*
- **Test post-secondary students at 0-1, 4, and 8 days [Abbott ID Now is acceptable].***
- **School-aged children under the age of 12 years who have been out of the province: test at 0-1, 4, and 8 days [Abbott ID Now is acceptable; in <8 years, self-test kit is acceptable for Day 0-1 test]. Students should receive a negative test before returning to school.***
- **Participants in out-of-province tournaments/games who are not fully vaccinated and who attend school in PEI should be tested prior to leaving PEI [Abbott ID Now is acceptable].**
- **Participants (regardless of vaccination status) in out-of-province tournaments/games who attend school in PEI should be tested upon return at day 0-1, 4, and 8 [Abbott ID Now is acceptable]. Students should receive a negative test before returning to school.***

Funerals / Custody Arrangements / Seasonal Residents / Compassionate Visits

- Travelers who are not fully vaccinated arriving to PEI to attend a funeral and/or wake, test at 0-1, 4-5 and 8 days, if still in the province [Abbott ID Now is acceptable for Day 0-1 test]. Must also receive a negative test within 24 hours of attending the funeral/wake [Abbott ID Now is acceptable].*
- Children who are not fully vaccinated traveling out of province as part of a custody arrangement, upon return to PEI, **test at 0-1, 4, and 8 days** [Abbott ID Now is acceptable for Day 0-1 test]. Must receive a negative test prior to returning to school/daycare.
- Parents who are not fully vaccinated arriving to PEI as part of a custody arrangement, **test at 0-1, 4, and 8 days** [Abbott ID Now is acceptable for Day 0-1 test].*

- Visitors who are not fully vaccinated arriving to PEI for the purpose of compassionate visits to be with a dying family member or for the birth of a child, test at 0-1, 4-5 and 8 days, if still in the province [Abbott ID Now is acceptable for Day 0-1 test]. Must receive a negative test prior to the first visitation.*

Screeners at Points of Entry

- Weekly testing of unvaccinated and partially vaccinated personnel screening travelers at points of entry (bridge, airport, and ferry terminals).

Postmortem

- **Test upon autopsy for cases with a clinical suspicion of COVID-19. Professional judgment should be used to determine whether postmortem testing is necessary.**

Requirement for COVID-19 Test for Entry into an International Country

- Travelers requiring a COVID-19 test to enter another country may be tested.

Testing Outside of Guidelines

- Contact the CPHO on call for consideration of testing outside of guidelines for outpatients, including any patients under the care of an ER physician.
- Contact the microbiologist on call for inpatients.

STAT TESTING

The request for Stat testing must meet PEI guidance or be directed by the Chief Public Health Office or the microbiologist on call.

The following would be considered for Stat (vs routine) testing:

- **Confirmatory tests for individuals who test preliminary positive at a point-of-entry**
- ER for admitted patients at QEH, PCH, KCMH, Western Hospital that meet routine criteria
- Patients admitted to the ICU or require critical care in the ED, including Code Blue cases where the patient is suspected of having COVID-19 or their risk factors are unknown.
- Symptomatic admissions to Labor and Delivery
- Symptomatic admissions to QEH Unit 9, Hillsborough Hospital, Provincial Addiction Treatment Facility, and Prince County Hospital Inpatient Psychiatry Unit
- Symptomatic residents of long-term care (LTC)
- Symptomatic pediatric patients admitted to hospital
- Offenders with symptoms transported by police officers
- As needed, the first test for off-Island nursing and medical staff working in acute care facilities
- As needed, the first test for off-Island technical workers (vendors, service personnel) who work in acute care facilities or long-term care facilities (See Appendix B for this request)
- As needed, the first test for workers with domestic travel who work in healthcare, meat packing plants, fish plants, correctional facilities, schools, early year centres/daycares
- Requests approved by CPHO or the microbiologist on call (see Testing Outside of Guidelines above)

For on Guidelines or CPHO/microbiologist on call approved Stat testing call:

Time	QEH Microbiology Testing	PCH Main Lab
8:00AM – 4:00PM	894-2312	438-4285
4:00PM – 11:30PM	2111 (ask for Microbiology tech)	438-4285
11:30PM – 8:00AM	2111 (ask for Hematology tech)	438-4285

The Chief/Deputy Public Health Officers may be reached through locating at QEH or CPHO 902-368-4996 or CPHO nurse on-call 1-902-213-5824.

Dr. Mead may be contacted Monday – Friday from 9-5 or the pathologist on-call after hours via the QEH switchboard at [902-894-2111](tel:902-894-2111)

Please let us know if you have any questions or clarifications.

Thank you all for your cooperation and dedication to all Islanders in these challenging times.