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Government of



**Department of Health & Wellness**

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**To:** Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, and Administrators

**From:** Dr. Heather Morrison, CPHO

**Date:** July 18, 2021 (Replaces June 27, 2021)

**Subject:** Updated Testing Guidance for COVID-19

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

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

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 requiring 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.
- 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 should be tested 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 requiring 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.

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- Any current HCW 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.\*
- Any current HCW working in long-term care or community care arriving to PEI from within Canada 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.\*
- Any current HCW 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.\*
- Weekly testing of **unvaccinated or partially vaccinated LTC staff** (public and private) who work in more than one healthcare site, regardless of how frequent they work in LTC (e.g., staff member who works in LTC once a month would require testing every 7 days). For staff with very infrequent visits (i.e., less than monthly), an alternate approach is to test between 48 and 96 hours prior to working and test again at 7 days. For unscheduled/urgent work, staff can be tested after their work shift and again at 7 days.
- Weekly testing of long-term care and community care staff who are **not fully immunized** and who work in a facility with a staff immunization rate <85%.
- Weekly testing of long-term care and community care staff who are not fully immunized and who reside with someone who is:
  - exempt from self-isolation following travel (e.g., registered rotational workers or truck drivers),
  - a taxi/ride-share driver who picks-up fares from the Charlottetown airport, who transports passengers off-Island, or who transports passengers to a Cough and Fever clinic or COVID-19 testing site, or
  - a commercial bus driver who transports passengers off-Island.
- Weekly testing of Microbiology staff at the QEH.

#### **Long-term Care/Community Care/Palliative Care Facilities – Residents**

- 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 7 after attending a wedding, a funeral, or other community-based event or gathering.**

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## 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.
- 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)

## Rotational Workers (including Truck Drivers)

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

- PEI residents 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 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 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.]\*

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## Other Workers

- Workers (residents and non-residents) 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) 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) 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.\*

## Other Travelers

### Domestic Arrivals

- Domestic arrivals (including students) – test at 0-1 and 8 days; test a maximum of two individuals per household; prioritize testing of unvaccinated individuals over vaccinated individuals [Abbott ID Now acceptable for both tests].\*
- **Test out of province attendees of camps and day programs prior to joining the camp.\***

### International Arrivals (including students)

- Test international arrivals at **0-1 and 8 days** [Abbott ID Now acceptable for the Day 0 test].\*
- Test Temporary Foreign Workers who are isolating at a designated facility at 0-1 and 9-11 days.\*

### Funerals / Custody Arrangements / Seasonal Residents / Compassionate Visits

- Travelers 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 traveling out of province as part of a custody arrangement, upon return to PEI, test at 0-1, 4-5, 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 arriving to PEI as part of a custody arrangement, test at 0-1, 4-5, and 8 days [Abbott ID Now is acceptable for Day 0-1 test].\*

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- Visitors 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.

### **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:

- 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)

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- 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.

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