



## Safe Work Practice Introduction

Every harvester doing their part in flattening the curve can help reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the fishing industry. The purpose of this safe work practice is to educate harvesters about COVID-19, their risk of exposure to the COVID-19 illness and control measures that can eliminate and prevent transmission of the disease.

The vessel owner/captain has a responsibility to exercise every reasonable precaution to provide a healthy and safe work environment and ensure the health and safety of every person they employ is protected while they are working. The vessel owner/captain is also responsible to ensure that crew members are provided with adequate information, instruction, and facilities to safeguard against workplace hazards. The vessel owner/captain must also ensure the health & safety of contract workers not employed by the vessel owner/captain (ex. mechanics, fuel delivery services, bait delivery, buyers).

COVID-19 is a worldwide pandemic, placing great impacts on many essential operations such as the fishing industry. The *Government of Nova Scotia* has included the fishing industry as an essential service. Risks associated to COVID-19 can be mitigated through each person doing their part in reducing the spread & flattening the curve.

Due to the close working conditions of the fishing industry, physical distancing is not always possible. Harvesters are encouraged to review this Safe Work Practice with all crew regularly.

## COVID-19: The Facts

- COVID-19 is a respiratory illness that can affect your lungs and airways and is caused by the novel coronavirus. COVID-19 is extremely contagious. Consequently, anyone who comes into contact with the virus is at high risk of becoming infected.
- COVID-19 spreads easily, mostly through person-to-person contact but also by touching surfaces contaminated with the virus.
- The virus can be spread through indirect contact when the respiratory droplets from an infected person lands on surfaces. It can be transmitted when individuals touch those surfaces with their hands and then touch their mouth, nose or possibly their eyes.
- All persons are at risk of contracting COVID-19. People who are infected with COVID-19 may have little or no symptoms as symptoms may take up to 14 days to appear after exposure to COVID-19. Some may display no symptoms but can still be contagious.
- Symptoms include but are not limited to: cough, fever, difficulty breathing headache, shortness of breath, muscle aches, sneezing, nasal congestion or runny nose, horse voice, diarrhea, unusual fatigue, loss of sense of smell, purple or blueish lesions on the feet, toes or fingers without cause.

## Safe Work Practice: Document Notice

Information & recommendations for the prevention of COVID-19 change daily. Information provided in this document may change as information updates from government sources.

The information provided in this Safe Work Practice directed to the Nova Scotia fishing industry is presented as a recommendation to assist in reducing the risk of transmission.

Please note that given the limited space on board most inshore fishing vessels, if a crew member on your vessel has COVID-19, it will be difficult to contain transmission of the virus to the rest of the crew.

**Safety Tip:** If you or a crew member display symptoms of COVID-19, return the vessel to port immediately. Symptomatic crew must self-isolate as detailed below and contact 811 immediately. All other crew members must self isolate and monitor symptoms. For more information please visit [novascotia.ca](https://www.novascotia.ca)

## Reducing the Spread of COVID-19

### 1) Limiting visitors on your vessel

- The vessel owner/captain must give permission to anyone wishing to board the vessel.

### 2) Screen all visitors and crew

- The vessel owner/captain must screen all visitors & crew wishing to board the vessel.
- The temperature of each person boarding should be taken.
- The vessel owner/captain should ask questions such as;
  - Do you have any symptoms of COVID-19 including a cough, fever or difficulty breathing?
  - Have you been in contact with anyone in the past 14 days who shows symptoms of COVID-19?
  - Have you been in close personal contact with anyone who has entered the province of Nova Scotia within the last 14 days?
- Any person that answers '**YES**' to any of the above questions should not be given permission to board the vessel. The vessel owner/captain should advise this person to return home to self isolate. If vaccinated, the person is required to self isolate for **7 days** following onset of symptoms or a positive test. The vaccinated person can leave isolation after 7 days if there are no symptoms or symptoms are improving and there has been no fever for at least 24 hours. If the person is unvaccinated, they must self isolate for a minimum of **10 days**. This person can leave isolation after day 10 if they are no longer having symptoms or symptoms are improving and there has been no fever for at least 24 hours. If the person has been a close contact of someone who tested positive, they should get tested **72 hours** after exposure and watch for symptoms, if they take a PCR test, no further testing is needed unless symptoms develop. If they take a rapid test, they should do a second rapid test 48 hours after the first.

### 3) Physical Distancing

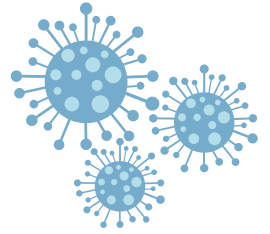
- Non-crew members such as; fish buyers, bait delivery personnel, fuel delivery personnel, enforcement agencies and all other non-crew member visitors to your vessel should practice 2 metres / 1 fathom / 6 feet from all vessel crew members if unvaccinated. If vaccinated, you are not required to physical distance unless the COVID-19 vessel policies state otherwise.
- Captains and crew members should take precautions to physical distance if unvaccinated. If vaccinated, you are not required to physical distance unless the COVID-19 vessel policies state otherwise.

### 4) On-board hygiene

- Captains & crew should reference the document provided by FSNS titled "*Vessel Cleaning Practices*" for detailed cleaning & disinfection information.
- Captain & crew must ensure hands are washed frequently, for a minimum of 20 seconds with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer.
- Ensure all high touch areas such as; ships wheel, VHF radio, banding table, galley and head are cleaned & disinfected daily.
- Ensure all items used for cleaning are disposed of properly. Place paper towels, rags and cloths into garbage bags.

### 5) Meal Prep/Consumption

- Ensure cooking and prep areas are cleaned before, during and after meal preparations.
- Ensure all cutlery, plates & cups are properly cleaned before & after each use.
- Reinforce "no sharing" policies, for example; utensils or condiments



## Reducing the Spread of COVID-19

### 6) *What to do if a crew member becomes ill*

- Crew members are responsible to self-monitor their health before boarding the vessel. Crew members should notify the vessel owner/captain immediately if they start to feel ill with symptoms of COVID-19.
- Based on the condition of the crew member and their symptoms, determine if emergency response is necessary.
- Whenever possible, the ill crew member should be isolated from the rest of the crew to decrease the person-to-person transmission of the virus. When doing this, isolate the ill crew member where possible to the sleeping area (bunks), monitor them (from a safe distance) and provide food, water, tissues and other necessary supplies.
- Clean all shared spaces regularly, especially the head (washroom).
- Place all personnel items belonging to the ill crew member into a garbage bag and store it away from all others (bedding, clothing, towels etc.). Ensure gloves are worn for this process.
- Take all reasonable precautions, vaccinated or unvaccinated, and keep a minimum of **2 metres / 1 fathom / 6 feet** away from the ill crew member.

### 7) *What to do when the vessel docks with a ill crew member*

- If the crew member does not have their own transportation, arrange for a vehicle to be dropped off and waiting for them at the wharf. Limit their contact with others.
- The ill crew member must immediately go straight home & self isolate as described above.
- The ill crew member must contact 811 and follow their instruction.
- Captain & remaining crew members should clean & disinfect the entire vessel.
- Captain & crew must monitor their symptoms, and self isolate as described above.
- If other crew members become ill or display symptoms, contact 811 and follow their instruction.
- Workplace illnesses must be reported to the Workers Compensation Board of Nova Scotia.

## Safe Work Practice Review

- 1) If any crew member becomes ill with symptoms related to COVID-19, they should not be permitted aboard the vessel prior to departure.
- 2) If any crew member becomes ill with symptoms during your fishing trip, follow the steps as outlined in this Safe Work Practice and contact appropriate health officials. All crew should self isolate once the vessel is docked & monitor for symptoms.
- 3) If you are unsure of the symptoms, or other information related to COVID-19 please contact **811** or visit **[www.novascotia.ca](http://www.novascotia.ca)** for the most recent information on the virus.
- 4) This document was created for use of harvesters in Nova Scotia and is intended to be used as a guided reference only.
- 5) This document was created by Fish Safe Nova Scotia with sourced information from of our safety partner the Newfoundland & Labrador Fish Harvesting Safety Association, as well as the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Government of Nova Scotia.

If vessel owners, captains or crew have questions or unresolved safety issues you can contact the NS Dept. of Labour Safety Division by calling 1-800-952-2687.