COVID-19 - Considerations for cross-border carriers

As part of moving critical goods to keep supply lines open, commercial drivers will not be subject to the current 14-day self-isolation travel requirements. Information on this travel advice can be found online.

This decision is based on expert direction from Alberta’s Chief Medical Officer of Health, working closely with the federal government and partners in the motor transport industry. This decision is consistent with direction provided by Transport Canada.

All commercial carriers and drivers, whether they cross provincial, territorial or the Canada-United States (U.S.) border, are being encouraged to follow comprehensive sanitation and health protocols to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The Government of Alberta recommends all commercial drivers travelling to or returning home from the U.S. or elsewhere in Canada do the following:

- Regularly disinfect vehicles and any shared surfaces, inside and out, with antimicrobial disposable wipes or bleach solution;
- Wash hands whenever you stop for fuel, food or other reasons;
- Stay away from public places or large gatherings;
- Have enough food and water supplies so you can self-isolate enroute if needed;
- Monitor your health, taking appropriate action should you feel ill at home or in another jurisdiction and self-isolate on days off.

Carriers returning to Canada after personal travel abroad or in the U.S. are required to self-isolate for 14 days.

Alberta Transportation officials are working closely with commercial carrier industry leaders and other jurisdictions to address issues that may impede the ability to maintain open supply chains.
Hours of Service

The following list of goods and services has been developed to help commercial carriers know what they can transport under the provincial and federal COVID-19 response.

The list includes such items as:

- medical supplies and equipment related to the testing, diagnosis and treatment of COVID-19;
- supplies and equipment necessary for community safety, sanitation, and prevention of community transmission of COVID-19 such as masks, gloves, hand sanitizer, soap and disinfectants;
- food, paper products and groceries for emergency restocking of distribution centres or stores;
- immediate precursor raw materials—such as paper, plastic or alcohol—that are required and to be used for the manufacture of the above items;
- fuel;
- equipment, supplies and persons necessary to establish and manage temporary housing, quarantine, and isolation facilities related to COVID-19;
- persons designated by federal, provincial/territorial or local authorities for medical, isolation, or quarantine purposes; and,
- persons necessary to provide other medical or emergency services, the supply of which may be affected by the COVID-19 response.

This list is being reviewed regularly and will be adjusted as required.

Exemption Eligibility

Provincially regulated carriers

Provincially regulated truckers carrying supplies and equipment in direct assistance to the pandemic relief efforts during the response to COVID-19 are eligible for a permit for exemption of some requirements established under the provincial Drivers Hours of Service Regulations. To apply for a permit please contact: central.permits@gov.ab.ca

Federally regulated carriers - carriers who cross provincial, territorial or the Canada-U.S. borders

Transport Canada has issued the Essential Freight Transport Exemption, which exempts federally regulated truckers carrying supplies and equipment in direct assistance to the pandemic relief efforts during the response to COVID-19 from requirements established under the federal Commercial Vehicle Driver Hours of Service Regulations, with certain safety conditions.

For more information, please visit: https://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/motorvehiclesafety/safevehicles-motorcarriers-exemptions-1248.htm

Carriers must not request, require or allow a driver to drive if they experience fatigue to the point where it is unsafe for the driver to drive. Carriers with a conditional Safety Fitness Rating due to outstanding safety or reporting issues will not be granted an exemption permit.

In order to use the exemption, a carrier must print out the full exemption at the link above and email a full driver (including drivers’ licence numbers) and vehicle list to: central.permits@gov.ab.ca.
Commercial Carrier Insurance

To support COVID-19 efforts, life and health insurers have confirmed that commercial truckers who hold travel health insurance policies on an individual basis will not lose coverage when entering the United States. Insurers will ask drivers with individual coverage to identify themselves as a cross-border commercial driver at the time of claim. You can view the industry news release here.

Road Tests

Effective March 20, 2020 Alberta commercial and passenger road tests were suspended for at least four weeks. Road tests will resume when it is safe to do so. Albertans who had a road test scheduled will be able to rebook online as of April 17, 2020 for a test on April 20, 2020 or later, at no additional charge.

The Government of Alberta is working with the commercial carrier industry to determine whether there are any urgent driving tests that need to be held in order to support maintaining delivery of goods, such as food and medical supplies, required as part of the Government of Alberta’s COVID-19 response.

Driver Medical Reports

Transportation has extended the timeline to 90 days for most drivers requiring a medical evaluation to provide their completed medical form when applying for or renewing their licence. This will reduce the current strain on the healthcare system. Medically high risk drivers will still be required to present their medical evaluation at the time of their application or renewal.

Motor Vehicle Documents

The Government of Alberta has extended the expiry date of select motor vehicle documents until May 15, 2020. This exemption applies to the following motor vehicle documents:
- operator’s licences;
- certificates of registration (including registrations obtained through International Registration Plan (IRP));
- licence plates;
- Operating Authority Certificates;
- Safety Fitness Certificates;
- permits; and
- validation tabs for licence plates.

Key contacts

Permitting Questions: central.permits@gov.ab.ca
Driver Program Questions: driverexaminations@gov.ab.ca
Driver Fitness and Monitoring: driver.fitness@gov.ab.ca
International Registration Plan: prorate@gov.ab.ca
Commercial Carrier Questions: carrierservices.info@gov.ab.ca

The most updated information about the Government of Alberta’s response is at: Alberta.ca/COVID19.