

What to Expect if Your Farm is in a CFIA Primary Control Zone

Final September 2022

Primary Control Zones (PCZ)

The CFIA will establish a Primary Control Zone (PCZ) around a farm where HPAI has been identified. A PCZ reduces the risk of spreading HPAI and will remain in place until post-outbreak disease surveillance shows there is no HPAI in the area. If additional infected premises are detected in BC, further PCZs will be created. CFIA will post a map on their website that shows all established PCZs.

PCZs use a 10 km radius with adjustments to the actual boundaries based on roads and geographic features. Zones generally start from the property line of the infected premise, not the premise itself.

Each PCZ contains an Infected Zone (three km and less from the infected farm). Premises within an infected zone are under quarantine and movements on or off those locations are subject to additional CFIA control.

Permits

A key element of a PCZ is the strict control of all movements of domestic birds, eggs, poultry / egg products and by-products, as well as material that has come into contact with domesticated birds. Movements in, out, or through the PCZ will require a CFIA permit.

Lower risk movements require a general permit which producers and transporters can complete themselves using a self-serve form from the CFIA website. Higher risk movements require a specific permit issued by the CFIA. The review and triaging of permits for commercial producers will be coordinated by the appropriate marketing board (i.e. egg producers contact the Egg Board; broiler producers contact the Chicken Board) and requests for permits will be screened there before being submitted to the CFIA.

Some specific permits will require pre-movement testing and / or dead bird surveillance.

CFIA has an interactive tool that determines what type of permit you'll need based on your type of movement and location.

<https://inspection.canada.ca/animal-health/terrestrial-animals/diseases/reportable/avian-influenza/hpai-in-canada/status-of-ongoing-avian-influenza-response-by-prov/permits-and-conditions/eng/1648871137667/1648871138011>

Speeding up the process – some reminders for submitting permits:

- To deem a permit “urgent,” the movement should be needed that day or the next, or if it requires live bird testing, within 3-4 days. Please mark the permit as urgent at the

bottom of section B in the “Description of the animals or things Destination 1.1” and mark the permit email as ‘Important.’

- If a permit application is urgent, please indicate this on the application PDF where applicable, mark the email as “high importance,” and write “URGENT” in the subject line along with the other permit information.
- Ensure the correct destination address is on the application. Some cities have been incorrect on applications so please double check.
- Please ensure no applications have a decimal point after/before the serial number that is generated.
- Both the Poultry EOC’s and CFIA’s permitting offices are slowed down when producers/growers contact them with questions. This situation means that fewer permits can be processed. If you have questions about the permitting process, please contact your Board, as Board staff are available to support applicants. Your cooperation in this manner will mean that the permitting offices will be able to process and issue permits more quickly.
- A reminder that if you are inquiring about a permit application or are requesting to cancel an application, please refer to the application using the serial number so that the application can be found by CFIA easily.

The Importance of Flock Health Questionnaires (FHQs)

The weekly submission of Flock Health Questionnaires (FHQs) is a crucial part of bird movement during an outbreak. FHQs must be completed for every sub-premises/barn – including those which are currently unstocked.

The information collected from FHQs is required for the revocation of PCZs and the removal of movement restrictions; thus, the continued cooperation from producers who have been regularly submitting these documents is greatly appreciated. The Post Outbreak Surveillance Period activities will be conducted primarily using information provided by FHQs. Producers who have not been regularly submitting FHQs are urged to do so.

Any flocks that have not submitted a minimum of 4 weeks of FHQs immediately prior to the PCZ release date may require additional testing including live bird testing of all stocked premises.

Due to the incredibly high number of premises/sub-premises we are tracking for PCZ releases, it would be very helpful if producers would note empty barns on FHQs so that we know that all barns with birds are being reported. Likewise, if the entire premise is empty for a time (after shipment and before placement), a NIL FHQ report is appreciated.

If one barn on a premise is empty, that should be noted on the line for that barn on the FHQ. For example:

- Barn 1 xx birds xx days old xx production type xx mortalities etc.

- Barn 2 xx birds xx days old xx production type xx mortalities etc.
- Barn 3 xx birds xx days old xx production type xx mortalities etc.
- Barn 4 – empty
- Barn 5 xx birds xx days old xx production type xx mortalities etc.

FHQs should be submitted as soon as possible to the CFIA. In the 2022 spring outbreak, the permits were sent to the AB-AI Flock Health Sheets (CFIA/ACIA) AB-AI-FlockHealthSheets@inspection.gc.ca. (Note this may change in future outbreaks.)

We all need to work together to release PCZ restrictions as early as possible.

Live Bird Testing

For producers/growers within the Primary Control Zone (PCZ), prior to dead bird surveillance bins being sent out and a week's worth of results collected, live bird sampling must be conducted for all flock movement. Samples can be collected by CFIA or your private vet and should be submitted to the Provincial Vet Lab for testing. Producers should assist the CFIA/vet with the sampling by presenting the required number of birds to the person doing the sampling. This cooperation allows for more samples to be taken in one day and more shipment of birds.

Within a week or so of dead bird surveillance starting, most farms will have enough data from the dead bird surveillance to not need live bird testing prior to movement. Farms within the infected zone (0 to 3 km) will still require live bird testing prior to movement.

Dead Bird Surveillance Using Bins

Dead bird surveillance is necessary to get movement permits approved. By complying with the CFIA rules, your surveillance will get done so that your movement permits can be approved. Not complying with the rules – even if you disagree with them – will result in permits that are in limbo until dead bird surveillance has been completed.

Producers/growers within the Primary Control Zone (PCZ) should look for the bins that will be dropped off at the end of driveways for dead bird surveillance once the PCZ has been established. These bins will also contain your sampling schedule. As soon as you receive your bins, look inside for your sampling schedule because some farms may have dead bird sampling on the same day your bins are dropped off.

As a reminder, CFIA only swabs the birds in the bins -- they do not take the birds with them. Producers should dispose of the dead birds in the usual manner once CFIA has swabbed the birds. CFIA marks the bins with coloured tape once they've swabbed the birds.

Bins will be labelled for each farm and for each airspace (sub-premises) with ID to ensure they're not removed from your driveway. Do not reuse bins from 2014 as CFIA may have

assigned your farm a different CFIA number. If HPAI occurs in the fall of 2022, you may use the bins from the spring outbreak.

For movement permits to be approved, flocks and poultry products will need two negative sampling events within a week of shipping. This could be either swabbed dead birds with negative results **OR** no dead birds. No dead birds now counts as a negative sample, but the flock health questionnaire must still be provided.

For the purposes of getting a movement permit, having no dead birds to sample (as long as the lack of birds in your bin is consistent with the information on your flock health questionnaire) counts as a clean test. However, if you do not turn your bin upside down to indicate a lack of birds to sample, CFIA counts this as not participating in the scheduled sampling. If you do not participate in the sampling (even inadvertently), your movement permit will be held up. In other words, **turn your bin upside down if you don't have any mortalities on one of your scheduled dead bird sampling days.**

Here are some other tips and tricks to ensure your dead bird surveillance goes as smoothly as possible.

- ✓ Put your bins out before 8 am on the collection day.
- ✓ Make sure your bin is visible from the road and not obscured by trees, shrubs or fences.
- ✓ Do not change the numbers on your bins. The CFIA used the official sub-premise numbers associated with your master premise ID number.
- ✓ You are allowed to collect dead birds up to 48 hours before your scheduled sampling date. They must be refrigerated. **Do not freeze birds!** Birds from different days should be bagged separately and marked with different dates. You can put more than one dead bird in a bag.
- ✓ Empty bins can be weighed down with rocks etc. if you feel there is any chance it will blow away due to high winds in your area.
- ✓ Birds should be collected if they died of natural causes or were culled due to a normal procedure in place for culling sick birds. **Under no circumstances should you euthanize a healthy bird in order to have a carcass in the bin to sample.**
- ✓ Remove the coloured tape the CFIA leaves on the bin to indicate to you that the samples have been collected. When you see the tape on the bin, you know you can remove the birds for proper disposal and keep the bins in your yard until the next sampling day.
- ✓ Bins have been stolen from farms. While it seems ridiculous that anyone would want to steal bins, it has happened. Please bring your bins in from the road between sampling days. CFIA suggests that producers/growers write "Biohazard. Do not touch. Property of CFIA" on the side of the bin to discourage would-be thieves.

Once your PCZ has been revoked, please clean the bins you've been using for dead bird surveillance and store them for a possible fall outbreak.

Extreme Heat or Cold

If you experience higher than normal mortalities due to the weather, and your farm is in one of the Primary Control Zones (PCZs), please continue to record mortalities on your Flock Health Questionnaire (FHQ). You should also note that the higher level of mortality is due to the heat/cold. You can include the barn temperature and humidity on the FHQ. If you send any birds to your vet, please attach the results of any tests to the FHQ.

CFIA will accept producer declaration for cause of any mortality spike as long as the mortalities can be correlated to:

- The weather on that particular day (correlated to weather network data for extreme weather).
- Age/type of bird most affected (e.g. older broilers and turkeys are very susceptible to heat stress).
- Mortalities do not continue to increase and return to baseline levels as weather normalizes.

Producers should continue with dead bird surveillance and complete the FHQ. This should include any communication with their veterinarian and the diagnosis, i.e. heat stress. The FHQ and the DBS must continue to be an accurate representation of the flock.

Critical Outbreak Milestones

In order to prove that HPAI is not present after an outbreak, CFIA goes through several set processes at the infected premise and within the PCZ. There are two steps (milestones) that have ramifications on the entire PCZ.

- 1. Compost piles capped at an Infected Premise (IP)**
 - **This triggers placement** in the infected zone. Placement is allowed one day after the piles are capped. The timing for the piles being capped is dependent upon how fast the IP completes the necessary steps under CFIA supervision.
 - **This also triggers the 14-day outbreak surveillance period** where all farms must complete their flock health questionnaires and participate in dead bird surveillance. If there are no anomalies, CFIA will start zone release testing in the infected zone to release the infected zone. This involves live bird testing of all sub-premises. Once the infected zone is released, the entire PCZ will then be one single zone.
- 2. Primary decontamination completed at the IP – BHT (biological heat-treated material – the compost) is removed from the barn and dry cleaning completed.**
 - This triggers the minimum 28-day post-outbreak surveillance period in the PCZ. All farms must complete their flock health questionnaires and participate in dead bird surveillance. If there are no anomalies, the CFIA will revoke the PCZ. Note that it may take a day or two after the 28-day period to complete internal CFIA reporting before the PCZ is released.

Release of Infected Zones

The first step in removing the Primary Control Zone is the removal of the Infected Zone – the 0 to 3 km zone around an infected premise.

The Infected Zone is removed after surveillance, including live bird testing, is conducted on all farms in that zone. Testing consists of swabbing 60 live birds in each ‘airspace’ (or barn) on each farm. This is a huge task but it must be completed or the infected zone – and the Primary Control Zone – will not be lifted.

If a single producer/grower refuses the testing or misses their scheduled testing day, the entire process will be delayed. You are urged to comply with the testing for the benefit of the entire poultry industry.

To make sure the testing goes as smoothly as possible, please consider the following:

- The testers can either enter your barn(s) – with your permission -- to swab the birds or you can bring birds out to them if you don’t want them in your barns.
- Have enough staff on hand to catch and present the birds for the testers to take the swabs.

The people conducting the tests will always follow the highest level of biosecurity and will have ID to prove they have a legitimate reason to be there. Do not hesitate to ask for identification.

How PCZs are Revoked

There are a lot of moving parts when it comes to primary control zones and the requirements to remove them.

After an infected premise completes their primary decontamination (disposal and dry cleaning), there is a 28-day period with dead bird surveillance and farms must complete their Flock Health Questionnaires (FHQs). PCZs will **NOT** be released until this 28-day period passes with no new cases of AI and **all farms completing** their FHQs.

During this 28-day period, it is crucial that all farms complete their flock health questionnaires (FHQs). They must be filled out even for empty barns. Missing FHQs could delay the release of a PCZ. Farms with missing data may have to comply with live-bird testing to supplement the information gaps.

Note: once the 28-day period is completed, CFIA staff still must write a recommendation that is sent to the national EOC and the CFIA president for approval. This may take a few additional days.

Attention all Fortis Gas Customers

During red biosecurity, Fortis will stop going onto farms to read gas meters. However, they still need information from farms on their gas usage over the past months.

For customers on:

- Rate Schedule 2 - Small Commercial,
- Rate Schedule 3-Large Commercial and any
- Residential-Rate 1 locations

Please take and submit pictures of your meter ideally once a month or at least every other month. Your invoices should show the meter readings on it and the approximate day of the month that the meter is read. If you can take a picture that closely aligns with the date on your invoice, it will help Fortis to invoice you properly. For example, if your last meter reading was on the 15th of the month, you should take the photo on or about the 15th each month. Fortis will send out invoices based upon estimates if they don't have a meter reading; however, they don't want to overbill or underbill their customers off estimates that will eventually have to be reconciled. Please send your meter picture with meter number or add the meter number to the email with picture and send them to metering.support@fortisbc.com

Some of the larger sites depending on rate class (Rate 5, 7, 23, 25, 27 or 22) would have meters that call into us on a cellular network so these customers would not need to submit pictures.

Fortis has also notified their operations group to stay off the sites unless it is an emergency.

PID Signs

Please take a few minutes to ensure your PID number is visible from your gate. While this check is essential for any farms in a Primary Control Zone, it's good practice for producers/growers in all areas of the province to do the same check. PIDs should be clearly visible from the farm gate. CFIA and the EOC all use farms' PIDs to verify the farm ID, bid drop off, and dead bird surveillance. You do not want anyone crossing into your CAZ to verify the farm PID.

CFIA ID Cards

In previous outbreaks, there were reports from other provinces of unknown people trying to gain access to farms by claiming to be CFIA staff. These people asked for tours of farms which is not something CFIA staff would normally do. CFIA staff carry badges and identification cards and they will not hesitate to show you their badges and ID cards when asked because they know the importance of identifying people who visit farms.

Do not hesitate to ask for identification if someone claiming to work for CFIA shows up on your farm.

BC Ministry of Agriculture Notification of Suspect Farms

The BC Ministry of Agriculture has developed a protocol with respect to suspect farms and they send out advisory notices to all regulated farms within 12 km of a suspect farm – either regulated or small lot.

Remember to stay respectful in your communications

AI is a stressful and bad situation. It is onerous to fill out movement permit applications and Flock Health Questionnaires. Participating in dead and live bird surveillance is adding to your already busy workday.

With the large volume of information being sent to CFIA, there is the opportunity for errors and misunderstanding. It is easy to make a mistake on your paperwork when you are under this much pressure. If you make an error, or if CFIA receives some information doesn't make sense to them, someone from your commodity board or CFIA will likely call you to confirm the information or ask for clarification. Please do not take your frustration out on the person who calls you. That person is simply trying to do a job and is working under the same system you are. The person who calls you is not able to change policies and procedures so there is no need to express your anger or frustration to them.

Please note that the following will not be tolerated by anyone calling you regarding permit applications and Flock Health Questionnaires:

- ✗ Foul language
- ✗ Name calling
- ✗ Yelling
- ✗ Bullying or harassment

If you are experiencing high levels of stress or anxiety, there is help available. Please visit the [AgSafe website](https://agsafebc.ca/mental-wellness/) for more information. (<https://agsafebc.ca/mental-wellness/>)

Useful websites

Status of ongoing avian influenza response by province

[Status of ongoing avian influenza response by province - Canadian Food Inspection Agency \(canada.ca\)](https://inspection.canada.ca/animal-health/terrestrial-animals/diseases/reportable/avian-influenza/hpai-in-canada/status-of-ongoing-avian-influenza-response/eng/1640207916497/1640207916934)

<https://inspection.canada.ca/animal-health/terrestrial-animals/diseases/reportable/avian-influenza/hpai-in-canada/status-of-ongoing-avian-influenza-response/eng/1640207916497/1640207916934>

Highly pathogenic avian influenza zones - List of active and revoked zones

<https://inspection.canada.ca/animal-health/terrestrial-animals/diseases/reportable/avian-influenza/hpai-in-canada/status-of-ongoing-avian-influenza-response/ai-zones/eng/1648851134912/1648851359195#revokedzone>