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## Ford to restart Canadian assembly May 25, a week after most N.A. factories

MICHAEL MARTINEZ

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REUTERS

Starting May 18, Ford says North America assembly plants previously operating on three-shift patterns will return with two-shifts, most two-shift plants will return on one shift and most one-shift factories will operate on one shift.

Ford Motor Co. will join the rest of the Detroit Three in resuming most North American vehicle assembly on May 18. However, production at the automaker's Oakville, Ont., plant won't resume until May 25.

Ford Canada on Friday wouldn't say why the Oakville Assembly restart is delayed by a week, only that it is part of a "phased approach to resuming production in North America."

Production at Ford's engine plant in Windsor, Ont., is scheduled to begin May 19, following the Victoria Day holiday.

"Our restart plans have included considering pandemic conditions, supplier readiness, dealer requirements and customer demand," Ford Canada spokeswoman Lauren Moore

said in an email to *Automotive News Canada* on Friday. "Production will start at a reduced level in May and will ramp up as our workforce and supply chain are able to support."

Ford Motor Co. on Thursday in Dearborn, Mich., made the decision to restart production just hours after Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer lifted restrictions on manufacturing in the state.

The automaker said it planned to resume full operations at parts depots on May 11. North American plants, with a couple of exceptions, will resume production May 18 on fewer shifts.

Factories that normally operate on three shifts will be reduced to two, while plants on two shifts will fall to one. Ford said its Flat Rock Assembly Plant in southeast Michigan and Oakville Assembly Complex in Canada will remain closed until May 25.

Ford said it will also call back roughly 12,000 "location-dependent" white collar employees working in fields such as informational technology and facilities management.

## LESSONS LEARNED

"We've been working intently with state and federal governments, our union partners and a cross-section of our workforce to reopen our North American facilities," Jim Farley, Ford COO, [said in a statement](#) Thursday. "We have reopened our facilities in China, successfully begun our phased restart in Europe and have been producing medical equipment in Michigan for more than six weeks and are using the lessons from all of that to ensure we are taking the right precautions to help keep our workforce here safe."

The automaker last week [rolled out safety plans](#) that call for more time between shifts, mandatory face masks, proper social distancing where applicable and the closure of many common areas such as cafeterias and fitness centres. Workers will be subject to daily health checks and temperature scans before they can enter a building.

Officials last week said some salaried employees could remain out of the office until early July.

Ford has been talking with the UAW almost daily about how, and when, to bring factories back online, Gary Johnson, Ford's head of manufacturing, said last week.

UAW President Rory Gamble — echoing a statement issued when General Motors and Fiat Chrysler announced restart plans — noted the union will continue to focus on "health and

safety protocols in which we have the contractual right to protect our members."

Ford executives last week said they believe they cleared another benchmark cited by Gamble: whether executives would be comfortable sending their own families inside the plants.

"Absolutely, I would feel comfortable my family coming back to work at a Ford facility," Farley said. "I completely trust the process we've come up with."

**Whitmer earlier Thursday** said Michigan's factories can reopen on May 11, giving suppliers time to prepare for automakers to come online the following week.

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**BernardP** • 17 days ago • edited

Please Ford, hurry up and build the Altas Blue 2020 EDGE SEL I have on special order (order receipt acknowledgment dated February 17). I should have been driving it for 3 weeks already.

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