



COVID-19 Rapid Testing Guidance

Issued 1/10/2022,

Revised July 20, 2022

Overview

The requirements to test employees in various settings continues to evolve as experts study the changing nature of the COVID-19 virus. This guidance is updated to help support departments to understand when to test, who must test, and how to meet the new testing requirements required by the Cal/OSHA Emergency Temporary Standard and the updated definition of who is a “close contact”. For those who are required to test, testing must be made available at no cost to the employee and on work time.

Early in the pandemic, PCR tests were the only available COVID-19 tests which, while accurate, were lab-run, took 24-48 hours to obtain results, and were costly. With the availability of rapid antigen in-home testing, the ability to support employee testing has improved. Rapid tests provide accurate, timely (within 30 minutes), and cost-effective tests that are a good test of disease transmissibility.

Related definitions:

Close Contact: A close contact is defined as the sharing the same indoor airspace with a COVID-19 positive individual for greater than 15 minutes over a 24-hour period, during the COVID-19 individuals infectious period (up to 48 hours prior to development of symptoms or positive test if asymptomatic).

Outbreak: An outbreak is defined as three or more COVID-19 cases in an “exposed workplace” within a 14-day period. The rolling 14-day period is measured beginning with the date of the third known COVID-19 individual and looking back 14-days. The outbreak is over when there are no new COVID-19 cases detected in the exposed workplace for a 14-day period.

When to Provide a COVID-19 Rapid Test

Settings where COVID-19 testing is required:

- a. **Workplace Outbreaks:** The Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Emergency Temporary Standard, as revised, requires employers to provide testing to the exposed group in the event of an outbreak. Employees are required to test (unless exempted) on day 3-5 and weekly thereafter until the outbreak is resolved. Employees are exempt from testing when they have had a confirmed COVID illness in the last 90 days and do not have symptoms.
- b. **Ending quarantine early for COVID Positive Employees:** To shorten isolation and quarantine for employees who test positive for COVID. These employees must quarantine for a minimum of 5 days but may come back on days 6-10 with a negative rapid antigen test. A negative test is not required to return to work after completing a 10-day quarantine.

Settings where COVID testing is recommended:

- **Close Contacts from Work Exposure:** Employees who have had a close contact, and their work area is not in an outbreak status, are not required to test. If they choose to test, it should be

done on day 3-5 after their exposure. These employees may remain in the workplace as long as they continue to be symptom free.

Obtaining Rapid Antigen Test Kits:

Departments should procure test kits by their usual methods. An adequate reserve of test kits should be available for managing current and future outbreaks in the foreseeable future (through the calendar year), keeping in mind also the expiration dates of some kits. If a small department is newly in an outbreak, they may be supported in the interim before their supplies arrive by reaching out to DHR.

Distribution of Rapid Antigen Test Kits:

Departments are encouraged to develop a successful internal process for distributing kits to affected employees and tracking compliance to meet the weekly testing requirements set out by Cal/OSHA. Departments will identify a main contact person to maintain data and process integrity.

The City Administrator's office can provide links to vendors with prior ordering success.

Reporting & Recording of Test Results:

Report results into the People and Pay system when an employee:

1. Has a positive result, including a photo of the positive test or lab report. This supports the employee's use of COVID-Leave;
2. Has a negative result after testing positive and returns to work after Day 5 of isolation, including a photo of the negative result; and
3. Has a negative result from weekly required testing during an outbreak, although the extra step of uploading a photo of the actual result is unnecessary in the weekly surveillance testing.