

Rapid Antigen Testing Resource Sheet for Workplaces

What is [Rapid Antigen Testing](#)? Rapid testing is an additional screening method that can help stop the spread of COVID-19 by identifying cases that otherwise may have been missed. A rapid antigen test can be performed anywhere (i.e., on-site, at the place of employment) by a health professional or a trained individual who has the knowledge, skills and judgment to administer the test (see [Who Can Perform a Rapid Antigen Test?](#)) and does not require shipping a specimen to a lab for processing. It is currently administered through a nasopharyngeal swab, combined swabbing of throat and both nares, deep nasal swabbing (both nares) or anterior nasal swabbing (both nares) and takes approximately 15 minutes to yield results, depending on the specific test being used. Organizations can test on-site 1-3 times per week and get results in about 15 minutes.

Rapid antigen tests are most appropriately used as a screening tool, and as an added layer of security for workplaces beyond routine workplace screening measures (i.e. daily self-assessment). Results should be interpreted with caution, and employees should continue to adhere to the necessary COVID-19 infection prevention and control measures, such as physical distancing, use of PPE, and regular hand washing, to reduce the risk of infection.

Rapid antigen tests **should only be used on asymptomatic individuals** who have passed the initial standard screening conducted within the workplace. Rapid testing should **not** be used in either a confirmed or suspected outbreak in a workplace setting, or on individuals who have previously been infected with and recovered from COVID-19. Symptomatic individuals, or individuals who have had close contact with a known positive case should be directed to an Assessment Center for testing.

A **positive result** on a rapid antigen test is considered a preliminary positive and must be followed up with a laboratory-based PCR test from an assessment center within 24 hours. The individual who received a positive result on the rapid antigen test must self-isolate and cannot be permitted to return to the workplace until they receive a confirmed negative lab-based PCR test result.

Southwestern Public Health [COVID-19 Assessment Center Locations and Hours](#)

An **inconclusive result** can be immediately re-tested at the workplace. Individuals with inconclusive results are to be treated as a presumptive positive, they should self-isolate and book a laboratory PCR test from an assessment center within 24 hours. They should not be permitted to return to the workplace until they receive a confirmed negative lab-based PCR result.

Self-isolation: An individual who receives a positive result on a rapid antigen test should self-isolate until the result of the lab-based PCR test is known. After you have had a lab-based PCR test, learn [what you should do while waiting for your test results](#). A staff member from your local public health unit will contact you to provide further guidance and ask you some questions if the lab-based PCR test results comes back positive.

A **negative result** from a rapid antigen test is considered a presumptive negative. Any person who screens presumptive negative, must continue to follow public health guidelines for physical distancing, washing their hands, wearing a mask properly and adhering to public health gathering orders.

To find out if on-site rapid antigen testing is right for you:

- Review the [Provincial Testing Guidance](#) and [training materials](#)
- Implement a [COVID-19 workplace safety plan](#)
- Train people or [hire a service provider](#) to administer the tests
- Apply to access free test kits or [find a supplier](#) to buy them from

Visit [COVID-19 Testing for Organizations](#) to learn about rapid testing onsite and how to access test kits.

This [Antigen Testing Services Directory](#): was created to help employers find service providers who can provide antigen testing, test kits, and offer services in French. This will soon be updated to include bio-hazard waste disposal companies for disposal of used antigen testing kits.

Reporting: The Ministry of Health requires organizations implementing rapid antigen testing to report the following aggregate level data to the province on a weekly basis:

- Number of antigen point-of-care test kits used.
- Number of invalid/ inconclusive antigen point-of-care test results.
- Number of individuals who tested positive with an antigen point-of-care test.
- Number of individuals who tested negative with an antigen point-of-care test.

How to: [Disposal of Test kits](#)

Public Health Ontario advises, as per the manufacturer's instructions, to decontaminate and dispose of all specimens, used extraction tubes (with dispensing nozzle closed), used test devices, and other potentially contaminated materials in a biohazard container as infectious waste, and to dispose of the biohazard container according to applicable regulations.

The biohazard waste container should be a yellow container and labelled with the universal biohazard symbol. Biohazard bags and biohazard waste containers do not come with the kits and need to be ordered separately, through your regular ordering process. Refer to the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change [C-4: The Management of Biomedical Waste in Ontario](#) for specifications around container labelling and disposal requirements.

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change: [The Management of Biomedical Waste in Ontario On-site management of biomedical waste by generators](#): Biomedical waste should be segregated from all other waste in a secure area not accessible to the general public and not adjacent to supply storage areas or food preparation or consumption areas and must be handled appropriately.

[Transportation of biomedical waste off-site](#): Prior to the removal of biomedical waste from a site for off-site disposal, the generator should package the waste in accordance with the on-site management of biomedical waste guidelines. The waste may only be transported by a waste management company for which a waste management system certificate of approval has been issued.

Screening for COVID-19: Guidance for employers [Additional Considerations for Rapid Antigen Screening](#)

Employers must make sure that all requirements described in the [COVID-19 Guidance: Considerations for Rapid Antigen Point-of-Care Testing](#), or updated guidance as it becomes available, are being followed when using rapid antigen testing as part of workplace screening. Employers should tell their local public health unit if they will be doing rapid antigen screening. Rapid antigen screening is optional. Employees have the right to refuse to participate in this testing, but if/when they comply that is consent to collect and report the data.

Employers using rapid antigen screening should develop a policy related to COVID-19 testing. This should be based on independent legal advice, which may include recommendations pertaining to:

- Human rights and accessibility
- Labour and employment law
- Privacy
- Health care consent
- Occupational health and safety

The OHSA and *Employment Standards Act* (ESA) and their respective regulations do not address mandatory testing of workers by employers. There may be other statutes and considerations that apply to a mandatory testing policy in workplaces.

Current Testing Programs:

Large Essential Businesses (more than 150 employees):

[Provincial Rapid Antigen Screening Program](#)

The Provincial Antigen Screening Program allows employers in priority settings to add an additional safety measure in high-risk and essential workplaces, to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. Through the program, rapid antigen point-of-care tests (POCTs) will be distributed to organizations in priority settings, to enhance existing routine screening measures for **asymptomatic** employees and other identified groups.

Sectors have been prioritized for the Provincial Antigen Screening Program based on criteria of risk, vulnerability and criticality, and include:

- All long-term care homes
- Retirement homes
- Essential industries
- Other congregate care and living settings
- Education
- Other essential services
- Health sectors

[Check eligibility for the Provincial Antigen Screening Program](#)

Resources on planning and implementation guidance for organizations conducting on-site screening for COVID-19 as part of this program: [Provincial Antigen Screening Program Resources](#)

Small and Medium Sized Businesses (150 employees or less):

[COVID-19 Rapid Screening Initiative](#)

The COVID-19 Rapid Screening Initiative will provide free rapid antigen tests for employees of small and medium-sized businesses. The tests will be distributed through participating local chambers of commerce and boards of trade in Ontario. Businesses (including non-chamber members) with 150 employees or less that are essential and open are welcome to participate in this program. The goal of the program is to identify asymptomatic cases of COVID-19 in the workplace that might otherwise be missed, helping to curb the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace, at home and around the community.

Canadian Community Organizations in frontline or direct service delivery of critical services or supports:

[Stop the Spread and Stay Safe! Program: COVID-19 Screening for Community Organizations](#)

The Stop the Spread and Stay Safe! Program will provide access to easy and free tests to implement as part of a screening program to mitigate risk to community organization staff and the community the organization supports, contributing to the collective response to COVID-19 through rapid screening . Community organizations include: a charity, a non-profit or an Indigenous community organization with five (5) personnel (staff and volunteers) who work in close proximity to each other or have direct contact with community members.

For more information, please reach out to your local Chamber of Commerce or contact our Southwestern Public Health COVID-19 Response Centre at 1-800-922-0096 ext. 9.

[Aylmer & Area Chamber of Commerce](#)

[Ingersoll District Chamber of Commerce](#)

[St. Thomas and District Chamber of Commerce](#)

[Tillsonburg District Chamber of Commerce](#)

[Woodstock District Chamber of Commerce](#)