

CFIB Q&A

When can an employer require an employee to get a test? Have a situation where an employee was off for about a week with a "cold" but refuses to get tested.

- This is considered a Labour issue and we are not able to provide a response. Questions can be submitted to Alberta Labour at [alberta.ca/contact-employment-standards.aspx](https://www.alberta.ca/contact-employment-standards.aspx)

If an employee has already had COVID, do we still have to test him/her?

- Employees that have previously tested positive for COVID-19 should not take a rapid test within 6 weeks of their diagnosis.

We have employees who travel to customers sites. Would this test be useful to test them before and after the site visit?

- Rapid testing should be done on a consistent basis up to two times per week. As COVID-19 has a 14 day incubation period, screening an employee immediately after returning from a work site, will have no benefit. However, regular screening of up to twice per week on employees is most effective.

Is there information on a false positive and false negative results?

- False positives do occur. This is why we encourage that if someone tests positive on a rapid test, that they have a follow up PCR test. If they test negative on the PCR test; they are allowed to leave isolation and return to work.
- False negatives also occur which is why receiving a negative on a rapid test does not give someone permission to stop following the public health rules. Regardless of the results, all public health rules must be followed at all times.

If we are accepted into the program and our workplace receives these tests, does it become a requirement to provide the report to you each week even if a test isn't performed that week?

- The program does require that businesses are doing regular screening on their employees. In specific instances, Alberta health may approve less frequent screening; however as businesses should be doing regular screening, we would ask that report be submitted weekly.

Could a location be considered as an outbreak if there are 3 positives with rapid testing and now is required to close business for 10 days?

- Rapid testing is considered a presumptive positive. It will only be considered an outbreak, and possibility affected by the [workplace closure](#) requirement if 3 or more employees test positive via a PCR test.
- A rapid testing program can help you to identify pre-symptomatic and asymptomatic cases, so they can be isolated early to stop the spread. This will assist you in avoiding the possibility of having an outbreak.

Will you detail the process to apply for & receive the rapid test kits?

- The application form is available on the following site - www.alberta.ca/rapid-testing-program.aspx.
- The Government of Alberta is working on streamlining the approval process and intends to post a simplified application form in the next week.

If approved to test, can we choose when to stop testing?

- The Government of Alberta is approving rapid testing programs up to December 31, 2021, however you are able to apply for a shorter time period.

Are these tests useful for small companies that only have a couple of people that come into the office?

- The tests are more useful for larger companies, however if you have a small workforce that are required to be in person and the business would not operate if the majority of the workforce contracted COVID; the rapid testing program would be useful in this situation.

What if one person refuses to take the test?

- The Government of Alberta is not mandating the use of the tests. It is up to the individual employer if they choose to make the tests mandatory, however we would encourage you to consult legal counsel prior to making the program mandatory.

Can you confirm the false positive or false negative with a negative PCR they can return to work?

- Yes, if an individual tests negative on a PCR test, they are able to return to work immediately.

Would you recommend signing up for the program for any level of mask use? What about if all your staff wear a 3 level/KN95 vs a cloth mask?

- If all the staff are wearing a KN95 mask, the program may not be as effective as there is less risk of COVID spreading. However if employees are all wearing cloth masks; the program will assist in identifying pre-symptomatic and asymptomatic cases, so they can be isolated early to stop the spread.

We have 5 locations with over 80 employees - can we have this in each location?

- Yes, the program is not limited to a single site per business.

Previously it was stated that these test are not to be used on a symptomatic individual. How would that work for an individual with pre-existing conditions with a previous negative, such as allergies?

- The rapid test can be performed on individuals who have pre-existing conditions such as allergies. It will be just as effective at identifying pre-symptomatic and asymptomatic cases, so they can be isolated early to stop the spread.

Are these in used at Alberta Health Services (AHS) and the Alberta Government?

- Yes, these tests have been used at AHS assessment centres on symptomatic individuals.
- Rapid testing programs have been set up by various ministries, and the Alberta Health Emergency Operations Centre program will begin mid-May.

Is there still a need for testing once everyone has had a vaccination?

- As individuals may still contract COVID even though they have been vaccinated, there is a benefit to rapid testing.
- The vaccine will have no impact to the rapid test results.

Biohazard disposal? How do we set this up?

- It is the individual businesses responsibility to set up the biohazard disposal. The process is different depending on where you live, however some pharmacies accept the material and in other locations biohazard materials can be disposed of at your landfills.
- If you have a cleaning company, the cleaning company may be able to arrange this for you.

Just to confirm, there are only two outcomes for these tests, positive, or the yellow slowdown option. Regardless of the outcome the individual is not required to isolate but the yellow option should be taken as an indication to go get an official test?

- The test may be positive (red light), negative (yellow light) or inconclusive (no light).
- As per Chief Medical Officer of Health [Order 06-2021](#), if an individual receives a positive result or inconclusive, they are required to isolate immediately and are encouraged to get a follow up PCR test.

Through third parties I can purchase the Abbot and BD screening devices. Do they have Alberta Health criteria for reporting as well?

- If you purchase the test direct from the manufacturer, there is no requirement to report to Alberta Health; however regardless of where you receive the tests you must follow the [Industry Initiated COVID-19 testing guidelines](#).
- The Government of Alberta's offer to you as part of the rapid testing program, is to provide the tests to you at no charge.

I am worried about staff that refuse to get vaccinated. Do you think in the future, fully vaccinated staff would not have to do rapid testing and there might be a time that the rapid tests would be way to keep workplace safe when staff aren't vaccinated?

- Rapid testing screening programs can identify pre-symptomatic and asymptomatic cases – people who don't know they're infected with COVID-19 – so they can be isolated early to stop the spread. It will not be a mandatory program.
- Individuals who have been vaccinated can also take part in the rapid testing program, and the vaccine will have no impact on the rapid test results.

Will the PCR test be completed sooner with a positive rapid test result so staff can come back without a 3 day loss?

- There is no way to expedited a PCR test. Employees will have to sign up for testing via an AHS assessment centre and the test turn around times are dependent on how many other tests are being completed during that period.

To store the kits, is there any special equipment requirement.

- Tests are to be stored between 2 degrees and 30 degrees Celsius.

After visiting a client facility, how long do you wait to post test?

- Rapid testing should be done on a consistent basis up to two times per week. As COVID-19 has a 14 day incubation period, screening an employee immediately after returning from a work site, will have no benefit. However, regular screening of up to twice per week on employees is most effective.

Can we use these for essential Alberta workers working in the US?

- The tests can be used for anything that supports an Alberta operation, including workers who may need to travel to the US for work.

How is the testing performed? Nasal? Blowing on it? by finger?

- Testing is performed via nasal swab. The [Step-by-step rapid antigen screen video](#) will explain the entire process.

You say you would like the whole work site tested, but what if an employee refuses?

- Ideally, all employees would participate, however the program is not mandatory; unless your work site chooses to make it mandatory. We would encourage you to consult legal counsel prior to making the program mandatory.