

Ministry of Health Key Messages and Updates

Rapid Antigen Screening (General)

- With results available in about 15 minutes, workplace rapid antigen screening allows organizations to quickly identify potential COVID-19 cases among workers not showing symptoms (asymptomatic) and help prevent outbreaks that may otherwise lead to a closure.
- Workplace screening for COVID-19 can help keep organizations open, support business continuity and enhance workplace safety.
- All sites implementing rapid antigen screening in Ontario must ensure the tests are used in accordance with the [COVID-19 Guidance: Considerations for Antigen Point-of-Care Testing](#). Rapid antigen screening does not replace COVID-19 infection prevention and control measures.

Ontario Together Portal

- Beginning May 7, organizations looking to provide COVID-19 screening at their workplace can quickly find out if they are eligible to receive free rapid antigen tests on the Ontario Together website.
- Through the new *COVID-19 Testing for Organizations* page, organizations can learn about rapid antigen screening and determine if they want, and are eligible to receive, free rapid antigen tests from the Government of Ontario through the [Provincial Antigen Screening Program](#).
- The *COVID-19 Testing for Organizations* page provides information to help organizations determine if implementing a rapid antigen screening program at their workplace is right for them.
- The new page will also allow organizations to digitally manage their planned intake, onboarding and ordering of test kits, and access related training resources and materials, all in one spot.
- Organizations eligible to receive free rapid antigen tests through the Provincial Antigen Screening Program must agree to program terms and conditions and review onboarding and training materials, before ordering free rapid antigen tests from the province of Ontario.

Reporting Preliminary Positive Results

- Effective May 12th, 2021 an amendment to Regulation 569 under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* (HPPA) has been put in place such that sites implementing antigen point-of-care screening in Ontario are no longer required to report preliminary positive results to Public Health Units. This applies to sites implementing antigen screening using point-of-care tests provided free of charge by the government, as well as sites implementing private testing.
- This change was pursued in response to concerns that the reporting of preliminary positive results was challenging for sites to manage, as well as concerns raised by Public Health Units who have limited capacity to act on preliminary positive results in a timely way, particularly in the context of the third wave of the pandemic.
- There is no change to the requirement that positive results from lab-based PCR tests be reported to Public Health Units.

Reporting Requirements

- To further simplify and streamline weekly programmatic data reporting requirements, the Ministry of Health has removed the requirement for organizations implementing antigen point-of-care screening to report confirmatory lab-based PCR results.
- Sites are now only required 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 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.
- This change is expected to facilitate increased uptake among organizations by easing reporting requirements, while maintaining strong oversight of antigen screening distribution and use across the province through the tracking of above metrics

Removing Registration and Manifesting Requirements

- In consultation with the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, has removed the registration and manifesting requirements for organizations using antigen point-of-care tests under the *Environmental Protection Act* (EPA), effective May 12th, 2021.
- This change removes barriers to sites that may not be aware of their requirements under the EPA and will support sites to focus on building safe management and disposal infrastructure.
- The following regulatory obligations imposed on site generators are removed:
 - **Registration:** submitting an initial Generator Registration Report to the Director (under the EPA) before transferring waste from the site.
 - **Manifesting:** completing a manifest in respect of the waste that is leaving the site.
- The following regulation obligations are still in place:
 - **Storage and handling:** The operator and owner of the site must store, handle and maintain the waste so as to prevent leaks or spills, and not store the waste for a period exceeding 24 months.
 - **Hiring an approved waste transportation system:** The generator must only transfer waste offsite using a registered waste transportation hauler. These haulers would complete additional paperwork to explain the origin of the waste as required for transferring purposes.
- Facility operators are encouraged to follow the manufacturer instructions for safe use of COVID-19 antigen point-of-care kits and associated wastes. The following is general guidance for the proper storage and handling of this waste:
 - The waste must be stored in containers to prevent leaks or spills and maintained in a way that prevents damage or deterioration of the container.
 - The waste should be segregated from all other wastes by depositing it into an appropriate container with the appropriate yellow universal biohazard label.
 - The waste should be stored in a secure area, not accessible to the general public, and not adjacent to supply storage areas or areas used for food preparation or consumption.
- Facility operators must only transfer waste offsite using a registered waste transportation hauler. Waste management carriers may be able to assist with guidance on proper disposal options.