

Antigen Screening Kits FAQ

Rapid Antigen Screening

The rapid screening kits are provided by the Ontario Government complimentary to small and medium sized businesses as an additional tool to help keep workplaces in Ontario safe.

Care and attention to follow the proper process for the screening kits is essential for this tool to be effective as any misuse can negatively impact the workplace.

The latest information from Health Canada suggests that up to one-third of people carrying the COVID-19 virus are asymptomatic with little to no noticeable symptoms. Over 50% of known COVID-19 cases were transmitted by an asymptomatic carrier. This makes it incredibly important to find asymptomatic carriers in order to combat the spread of COVID in our workplaces and our communities.

Frequent screening with rapid antigen tests increases the chances of early identification of cases in asymptomatic individuals ONLY. Recommended frequency is twice per employee, per week.

The Ontario Government has also released guidance for organizations that choose to participate in COVID-19 screening that falls outside of the public health care system, to ensure there is appropriate oversight and consumer protection and that public resources are supporting public health initiatives.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who can businesses give screening kits to and who can we screen?

At this time, you CANNOT give kits to anyone. They are ONLY for use with your employees that are frequently coming to the workplace.

You also cannot screen anyone else other than employees coming to the workplace, this is essential as reporting presumptive positives or inconclusive results may call into question your ability/authority to do so.

Employees have the right to refuse to be screened. When an employee agrees to be screened, they are also giving their consent for you to collect and report the results.

What is the accuracy of these screens?

The screening kits are highly accurate - in the range of 90% accurate - however there are circumstances where they may show a false positive or false negative. This is why NO ONE SHOWING SYMPTOMS should be screened using these screening kits, as a false negative result could put the organization at risk of exposure. Anyone experiencing COVID-19 symptoms must get a PCR test and follow public health guidelines.

How do we dispose of the waste?

The screen pad and vial (with the swab and buffering agent in) are considered hazardous waste. Some businesses may have the ability to dispose of this material safely. If not, then the Chamber has a disposal bin to appropriately dispose of this waste that can be accessed when refilling your order.

How is the screening administered - through the nostril or mouth?

Rapid Antigen Screening is a nasal swab and not invasive. The swab must be inserted into each nostril 2 cm (1 inch) for 5 to 7 seconds, while ensuring the inside of the nostril is wiped by the swab for that time.

What is the reporting responsibility our business has with respects to the results of the screens?

When you picked up your screening kits, you signed a document that makes you responsible to report all results of the screening kits in your possession. The data that is required to be reported is: total number of screens completed, total number of positive results, total number of negative results, and total number of inconclusive results. The reporting form is available [HERE](#).

How many staff can go to pick up and train for the screening kits?

Due to safety protocols and capacity limits of our training area, we are limiting in-person visits to the facility. Please send **ONLY one person** from your organization to pick up screening kits.

Can I just drop in and pick up kits when I need refills to my order?

To keep everyone safe, it is important that we keep the number of people onsite at any one time to a minimum to reduce the opportunity of close contact. You **MUST** wait until your confirmed pick-up day and time. You will receive an email from our Chamber with your time/day confirmation.

We have a process in place to get people in and out of the Chamber office as quickly as possible.

If an employee has a positive or inconclusive result, what is the next step?

Anyone who receives a result of positive or inconclusive from the screening kit MUST immediately self-isolate and contact local Public Health for a PCR Test within 24 hours. Anyone with a positive or inconclusive result cannot be permitted in the workplace until there is a confirmed (by Public Health) negative test result.

It is REQUIRED that the employee notify Public Health with any positive results immediately.

According to the Ministry of Health as of now, you are required to report all Presumptive Positives, and Inconclusive to the Local Public Health authority.

Your employee is required to follow all of Local Public Health authorities, direction and MUST arrange for a PCR test within 24 hours of their presumptive positive or inconclusive result.

We will be reporting all of the results to the Ministry of Health and Health Canada for data collection.

Who can perform the screen on the employees?

The Ontario Government authorizes "self" screening for these kits. However, there is a requirement that screenings are supervised by a Screening Supervisor. The Screening Supervisor is the person who watched the training video when they picked up the initial order of screening kits and received the follow up email.

Employees must do their own screenings; no one should perform a screening on anyone else. The Screening

Supervisor is present during the screenings to instruct employees and ensure the procedure is followed for an accurate result.

Can other people in the organization be trained to supervise the screening process?

At this point the Ministry of Health requires that a trained individual supervises the screening process. You will receive an email after your initial pick up, which will include a link to the training video. This video can be used as a refresher and/or to train other supervisors.

What is the frequency we should be screening our employees?

The recommendation from public health is that all employees should be screened twice per week.

Some businesses may want to test their employees more frequently because of the setting or higher frequency of close contact. If that is the case for your business, please contact the Chamber and we will try to fulfill the order if possible. Providing screening kits to test more frequently will affect our supply and we will need notice in order to alert our supplier.

Conversely some businesses may want to test employees less frequently or may have a variety of employee schedules to consider. It is the responsibility of each business to determine frequency of screening. Please put the safety of your employees first, which will help to ensure you have a safe workplace.

Do these kits have an expiry date?

The screening kits do expire. The supply of screening kits have expiry dates in 2022. We will advise businesses if the screening kits are close to expiring.

Using the kits after they expire is not advisable as their accuracy may be compromised. Caution should be taken to review the box and ensure the kits are not expired.

Do we only screen employees who are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms?

No! In fact, anyone who is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms must be kept OUT of the workplace and must not be allowed to return until local public health provides a confirmed negative result from a diagnostic PCR Test and all public health guidelines have been adhered to.

It is allergy season and people are experiencing symptoms similar to COVID-19. Should we avoid screening people that may be experiencing allergy symptoms, or should we screen them regardless?

Again, anyone showing symptoms that are similar to COVID-19 could in fact be infectious and should not be screened using these rapid screening kits; they should immediately contact public health for a PCR assessment.

While we recognize some symptoms can resemble allergies, it is important that these symptoms are not ignored or overlooked as there could be a risk to the organization.

I am a consultant that works with clients on workplace safety. Can I order screening kits on behalf of my clients and screen their employees?

No. These screening kits are provided free of charge to small and medium sized businesses for their sole purpose. A designated employee must be assigned the responsibility of taking the supervisor training, ensuring proper screening processes are adhered to and reporting the results of the screening kits on behalf of the employer. While there are avenues available for third party vendors to purchase their own kits outside of this program to provide screening services, the Chamber's program is intended to remain complimentary and direct to employer only.

Can I purchase extra kits so I can screen those I want to? If so, how much do the screening kits cost?

No. The screening kits are not for sale and we are not authorized to charge anyone for these kits. When picking up your order, you will be required to sign a document stipulating that you not sell or distribute these screening kits.

The value of the box of 25 kits is approximately \$200 based on known retail information. We are able to offer the kits at no cost to businesses because they are funded by the Federal and Provincial Governments.

I am a volunteer/employee for an organization we have a number of volunteers that would like to meet regularly in-person. Can these kits be used for that purpose?

No. The kits are not intended to be used to verify negative carriers so that restrictions issued by the province or local public health can be waived. Any person who screens presumptive negative, MUST continue to follow public health measures of distancing, washing their hands, wearing a mask properly, and adhering to public health gathering orders.

Some of our employees are required to travel for business. Can these screening kits validate them for travel?

No. While these screening kits are extremely reliable, they are not a tool for travel or usurping any Federal, Provincial or International guidelines.

I noticed there are two packages marked "Control Swabs" in each box of screening kits. What do we use them for?

Contained in each box of screening kits, you will find two "Control Swabs"; one of those swabs will produce a negative result and the other swab will produce a positive result. These control swabs are ONLY to be used for quality control purposes. If you are finding that the results of screening kits from a particular box are not showing up on the testing pads, then you can follow the process in the manual provided to do a quality control check of the pads by simply following the same testing regime. DO NOT SWAB ANYONE WITH THESE CONTROL SWABS; the swabs already have ingredients on them to produce results in the quality control process.

While the positive control swab will show positive for COVID-19, there is nothing on the swab that is infectious or that will pass COVID-19 to a person. It is a pre-loaded swab and should not be used for anything other than quality control, if required.