



# Port Hope and District Chamber of Commerce (PHDCC)

## Provincial Antigen Screening Program (PASP)

# Frequently Asked Questions

*The Voice of Business*

### **Why do this?**

The latest information from Health Canada suggests that up to 1/3 of people carrying the virus are asymptomatic causing little or no noticeable signs, however, over 50% of known cases were transmitted by an asymptomatic carrier. This makes it incredibly important to find asymptomatic carriers in order to combat the spread and get to more normalized community life.

A COVID-19 rapid screening test can be performed anywhere (e.g. on-site, at the place of employment) and does not require shipping a specimen to a lab for processing. It takes approximately 15 minutes to yield a result.

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. Ontario has also released guidance for organizations that choose to participate in COVID-19 testing 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.

### **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, but when they comply that is consent to collect and report the data.

### **What is the accuracy of these screens?**

These are highly accurate in the range of 90% accurate, however there are circumstances where they may show a false positive or false negative. In particular this is why NO ONE SHOWING SYMPTOMS should be screened using these tests, as a false negative result might put the organization in a compromising position.

### **How do we dispose of the waste?**

As of May 20, 2021 the screen pad and vial (with the swab and buffering agent in) are being reviewed as potential hazardous waste. Some businesses may have the ability to dispose of this and should practice their protocols. Failing that it is recommended that businesses ensure they keep the used test kits in separate disposal bags, that are double bagged, and kept separate from regular waste. The Port Hope and District Chamber of Commerce is strategizing with waste management experts to determine the best thing for you to do with those bags. We will keep you posted.

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

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

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

In order to participate you have signed a document that makes you responsible to report all results of your screens. Total number of screens, all Positive, all Negative and all Inconclusive results must be entered in the reporting form available online at [INSERT WEBSITE HERE](#)

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

Due to safety protocols and our training area, we are limiting in-person visits to the facility. Send ONLY one person to pick up kits.

### **Can I just drop in and pick up kits for refills of my order?**

While you are not required to watch the video when picking up refills we MUST insist that you book an appointment time through our online system. For the safety of our staff and volunteers, it is important to keep the number of people down to reduce the opportunity of close contact. This will also enable us to have your order ready for you.

### **What is the next step if an employee has a Positive or Inconclusive result?**

Anyone screening Presumptive Positive or Inconclusive MUST immediately self-isolate and contact Local Public Health for a PCR Test within 24 hours and cannot be permitted in the workplace until there is a confirmed (by Public Health) negative test result.

Haliburton Kawartha Pine Ridge District Health Unit may be reached at 1-866-888-4577, ext. 5020. Testing appointments at Cobourg/Port Hope can be booked by calling 905-377-7783.

### **Is it REQUIRED that Public Health be notified of 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 authority's direction and MUST arrange for a PCR test within 24 hours of their presumptive positive or inconclusive result.

We will be reporting from our website 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 using these kits. However, there is a requirement that a Screening Supervisor who has been trained via the video you watched at your initial pickup and was sent after your initial order by email.

No one other than the employee should perform the swab procedure on any employee - the supervisor is there to instruct and ensure the procedure is followed for an accurate result.

### **Can I show my supervisors how to do the screens, have them watch the video to have them supervise the screens?**

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, contained in that email is a link to report results as well as a link to the training video to use as a refresher and/or 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. It is understood in some settings or with a higher frequency of close contact that some businesses will want to screen more than twice per week. Please advise us at the Port Hope and District Chamber of Commerce and we will try our best to accommodate you. We need to ensure we have the required supply of kits at our office.

### **Do these kits have an expiry date?**

Yes, they do have any expiry date. However, it appears that all of our supply is valid at least until 2022. We will advise if we are getting close to the expiry dates. Using the kits after they expire cannot be assumed to have the accuracy they do prior to expiry. Caution should be taken to review the box and ensure they are not expired.

### **Do I only give screens for employees showing symptoms?**

NO! In fact, it should be recognized that anyone showing 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.

### **It is allergy season and people are experiencing symptoms like COVID-19, should we avoid screening people that may be experiencing allergy symptoms, or should we screen them regardless?**

Anyone showing symptoms that are similar to COVID-19, could in fact be infectious and should not be screened and diverted directly to public health for a PCR assessment. While we recognize some symptoms can resemble allergies, the risk to the workplace is not worth ignoring them.

**I am a consultant on workplace safety, can I order on behalf of my clients and screen their employees?**

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

**Can I purchase extra kits so I can screen those I want to, if so, how much do they cost?**

No, these are not for sale. We are not authorized to charge anyone for these kits, and the document you signed also requires that you not sell or distribute these as well.

The box of 25 kits is approximately \$200 based on retail information we know of. They are expensive, and this is all funded by the Federal and Provincial Governments of Canada.

**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, these kits are not to be used to validate or substantiate an absence in following public health guidelines. They are not intended to be used to verify negative carriers so guidance rules by the Province or local public health can be waived. Any person who screens presumptive negative, MUST continue to follow public health guidelines 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 this screen validate them for travel?**

NO. While this screen has extremely good reliability, this is not a tool for travel or usurping any Federal, Provincial or International guidelines.

**I noticed there are two packages marked Control Swabs, what do we use them for?**

Contained in each kit are two Control Swabs, one will produce a Negative result the other will produce a Positive result. These are ONLY to be used for quality control purposes. If you are finding that the results are not showing up on the testing pads, 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 EXCEPT DO NOT SWAB ANYONE WITH THESE CONTROL SWABS, they have ingredients on them already to produce the results.

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 it is a pre-loaded swab and should not be used for anything other than quality control.