

Summarized CDS Guidelines: Testing Guidance for General Workplaces¹

As guidance related to COVID-19 response frequently changes, check the New Jersey Department of Health (<https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/ncov.shtml>) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/testing-healthcare-personnel.html>) for the latest information and additional details for additional guidance for your healthcare setting.

I. Populations that Fall Under these Guidelines

Employees in general workplaces that are not healthcare personnel² and those that do not already have facility-based guidance.

II. General Principles

The purpose of this document is to provide employers with strategies for consideration of incorporating testing for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19 into their preparedness, response and control plans. Employers should consider the following:

- A. Symptom screening, testing, and contact tracing are strategies to identify workers infected with the virus so that actions can be taken to contain the spread of the virus.
- B. Employers should determine their policies regarding employee testing.
- C. Symptom screening, testing, and contact tracing strategies should be carried out in a manner consistent with law and regulation, including laws protecting employee privacy and confidentiality. They should also be carried out consistent with Equal Employment Opportunity Commission guidance regarding permissible testing policies and procedures.
- D. Employers paying for testing of employees should put procedures in place for rapid notification of results and establish appropriate measures based on testing results including instructions regarding self-isolation and restrictions on workplace access.
- E. Employers should provide clear information to employees undergoing testing regarding:
 1. The manufacturer and name of the test, the type of test, the purpose of the test, the reliability of the test, any limitations associated with the test, who will pay for the test, and how the test will be performed, and
 2. Interpretation of the results, actions associated with negative or positive results, who will receive the results, how the results may be used, and any consequences for declining to be tested.
- F. Individuals tested are required to receive patient fact sheets as part of the test's emergency use authorization.
- G. Employers are responsible for recording cases of COVID-19 as occupational illness if the cases meet certain requirements.
- H. Employers are encouraged to consult with the state and local health departments to help inform decision-making about broad-based testing.

¹ Note: This is general guidance only and does not alter or supersede any requirements set forth in law, regulation, Executive Orders, Executive Directives, or other orders.

² **Healthcare Personnel (HCP):** HCP refers to all paid and unpaid persons who have the potential for direct or indirect exposure to patients or infectious materials, including body substances (e.g., blood, tissue, and specific body fluids); contaminated medical supplies, devices, and equipment; contaminated environmental surfaces; or contaminated air. HCP include, but are not limited to, emergency medical service personnel, nurses, nursing assistants, physicians, technicians, therapists (including but not limited to physical, occupational, speech, psychosocial, etc.), phlebotomists, pharmacists, students and trainees, contractual staff (i.e. per diem clinical staff and those third-party providers contracted to perform a service within the facility) not employed by the healthcare facility, and persons not directly involved in patient care, but who could be exposed to infectious agents that can be transmitted in the healthcare setting (e.g., clerical, dietary, environmental services, laundry, security, engineering and facilities management, administrative, billing, and volunteer personnel). For this guidance, HCP does not include clinical laboratory personnel.

III. Testing Individuals with Signs or Symptoms Consistent with COVID-19

- A. Employers should conduct daily in-person or virtual health checks (e.g., symptom and/or temperature screening) to identify employees with signs or symptoms consistent with COVID-19 before they enter a facility, in accordance with CDC's General Business FAQs.
- B. Employers should follow guidance from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission regarding confidentiality of medical records from health checks.
- C. To prevent stigma and discrimination in the workplace, employers should make employee health screenings as private as possible.
- D. Workers with COVID-19 symptoms should be immediately separated from other employees, customers, and visitors, and sent home or to a healthcare facility, depending on how severe their symptoms are, and follow CDC guidance for self-care.
- E. Waiting for test results prior to returning to work is preferred to keep potentially infected workers out of the workplace. Infected employees should be in quarantine or isolation.
- F. Positive test results using a viral test indicate that the employee has COVID-19 and should not come to work and should isolate at home. Decisions to discontinue home isolation for workers with COVID-19 and allow them to return to work should follow CDC guidelines at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/duration-isolation.html>.

IV. Testing Asymptomatic Individuals with Recent Known or Suspected Exposure to COVID-19 to Control Transmission

- A. Viral testing is recommended for all close contacts of persons with COVID-19. Because of the potential for asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic transmission of SARS-CoV-2, it is important that individuals exposed to people with known or suspected COVID-19 be quickly identified and quarantined.
- B. Employers are encouraged to work with public health departments investigating cases of COVID-19 and tracing contacts to help reduce the spread of SARS-CoV-2 in their workplaces and communities.
- C. Testing that is repeated at different points in time, also referred to as serial testing, may be more likely to detect infection among close contacts of a COVID-19 case than testing done at a single point in time.
- D. In some settings, broader testing (i.e., testing beyond individually identified close contacts to those who are possible close contacts), such as targeting workers who worked in the same area and during the same shift, may be considered as part of a strategy to control the transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in the workplace.
- E. Employers are encouraged to consult with the state and local health departments to help inform decision-making about broad-based testing.

V. Testing Asymptomatic individuals without known or suspected exposure to COVID-19 for early identification in special settings

- A. Viral testing of workers without symptoms may be useful to detect COVID-19 early and stop transmission quickly, particularly in areas with moderate to substantial community transmission. When communities experience moderate to substantial transmission, workplace settings for which these approaches may be considered include:
 - 1. Workplaces where physical distancing is difficult, and workers are in close contact (within 6 feet for 15 minutes or more) with co-workers or the public
 - 2. Workplaces in remote settings where medical evaluation or treatment may be delayed
 - 3. Workplaces where continuity of operations is a high priority (e.g., critical infrastructure sector)
 - 4. Workplaces providing congregate housing for employees (e.g. fishing vessels, offshore oil platforms, farmworker housing or wildland firefighter camps)
- B. Approaches may include initial testing of all workers before entering a workplace, periodic testing of workers at regular intervals, and/or targeted testing of new workers or those returning from a prolonged absence.

- C. Before testing a large proportion of asymptomatic workers without known or suspected exposure, employers are encouraged to have a plan in place for how they will modify operations based on test results and manage a higher risk of false positive results in a low prevalence population.

VI. Testing to Determine Resolution of Infection

- A. The decision to end home isolation and return to work for employees with suspected or confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection should be made in the context of clinical and local circumstances in accordance with CDC guidance available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/duration-isolation.html>.
- B. In most cases, evidence supports a symptom-based strategy to determine when to discontinue home isolation or precautions.
- C. For persons who are severely immunocompromised, a test-based strategy could be considered in consultation with infectious diseases experts.
- D. For all others, a test-based strategy is no longer recommended except to discontinue isolation or precautions earlier than would occur under the symptom-based strategy.

VII. References:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/testing-non-healthcare-workplaces.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>

<https://www.eeoc.gov/wysk/what-you-should-know-about-covid-19-and-ada-rehabilitation-act-and-other-eeo-laws>

<https://www.osha.gov/memos/2020-05-19/revised-enforcement-guidance-recording-cases-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/general-business-faq.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/worker-safety-support/hd-testing.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/duration-isolation.html>

VIII. Resources:

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus

www.covid19.nj.gov

www.osha.gov/coronavirus