



Health Canada and the Public
Health Agency of Canada

Santé Canada et l'Agence
de la santé publique du Canada

Canada

Rapid Tests for COVID-19 Screening in the Workplace

March 2021



Agenda

1. Background on rapid testing
2. New initiative to increase availability of rapid tests for workplace screening
3. Next steps
4. Questions and answers

Goal

Dramatically increase regular rapid screening in workplaces across Canada to reduce transmission and outbreaks

Current Status

- The Government of Canada has purchased over 40M point of care tests and distributed over half to provinces and territories. Most of these tests have been deployed in long-term care facilities, schools or for outbreak management
- The Government of Canada is putting in place additional contracts with vendors for additional supply of rapid screening kits to meet Canada's public health needs
- Acceleration and expansion of the deployment of rapid tests for Covid screening was recommended by experts as captured in the [Testing and Screening Expert Panel's first report](#), the [Industry Advisory Roundtable on COVID-19 Testing, Screening, Tracing and Data Management](#), and PHAC's [Interim Guidance on the Use of Rapid Antigen Detection Tests](#)
- Workplace screening has been extensively piloted by organizations in several provinces
- Some provinces have released guidance regarding screening and who can administer a test, with Ontario recently authorizing self-collection

The benefits of rapid COVID-19 screening

It helps organizations to:

- Better protect their employees
- Better protect their customers / clients
- Contribute to community safety by reducing community spread
- Facilitate a safer return to increased social and economic activity

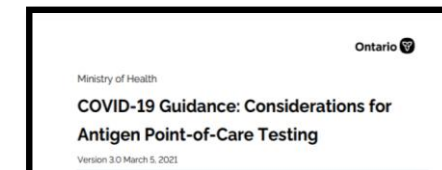
It helps in general to:

- Defend against COVID-19 as an extra layer of protection with other public health measures



How does the initiative work in the early phase?

- **The Government of Canada** will:
 - work with industry associations to prioritize intake organizations
 - supply rapid screening tests at no cost (tests may also be available from relevant provinces and territories)
- **Organizations** will be responsible for:
 - setting up rapid screening program
 - coordinating employees to be screened
 - administering screening
 - collecting and reporting on usage data
 - following all relevant local/provincial/territorial public health regulations and guidance



How will workplaces be assessed for suitability?

In early stages, will need to prioritize participants as supply and programs ramp



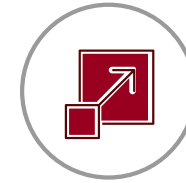
Critical industries

Critical industries are those deemed essential services and functions by Public Safety Canada ([Source](#))



High contact workers

High-contact workers are those employees whose roles fundamentally involve significant numbers of close interactions fellow employees, customers



Organizational readiness

Organizations that are prepared to implement screening and scale to their employee bases

*Focus will be on **national organizations** best supplied federally vs. from multiple provinces, or organizations unable to secure supply from relevant province/territory*

*Additionally, will consider geographic **hot spots**, the **diversity** across geographies and sectors (for-profit and non-profit) and benefits for **vulnerable populations** (e.g., Indigenous groups)*

Rapid screening implementation considerations



Identify Human Resources requirements (program coordinator, testing personnel, etc.)



Procure necessary PPE and sanitation supplies for testing personnel (masks, face shields, etc.)



Consult local public health regulations and other requirements (e.g., who can administer tests)



Establish data infrastructure (for reporting, security, privacy)



Develop communications plan for roll-out and engage employees

Non-exhaustive – for discussion purposes only

Next steps

- **Associations** will work with members to identify organizations that meet the early phase prioritization criteria
- **Associations** are asked to collate information and provide to Government of Canada
- Government of Canada will contact **organizations**
- In the meantime, **organizations** are encouraged to:
 - leverage the collective resource available on the [Government of Canada website](#)
 - understand relevant local, provincial and territorial public health regulations
 - review implementation booklet and standard operation procedures such as those by [Communitech](#) and the [Creative Destruction Lab Rapid Screening Consortium](#) to understand what is entailed in setting up a screening program

Information required to support requests

- Number of critical workers in high-contact settings that will be screened
- Nature of workers to be screened (in terms of their level of contact, their criticality, vulnerability, etc.)
- Locations at which screening will occur
- Requested number of kits for first month
- Confirmation that arrangements have been made for kit administration
- Confirmation that the requesting organization is not receiving the kits from relevant provincial or territorial governments

Moving forward

- As the supply of tests increases, organizations may be able to order directly from vendors
- Screening continues to add an additional layer of protection in addition to vaccinations, PPE, etc.
- New technologies on the horizon may facilitate self-administered / home kits and potentially reduce the costs of regular testing

- **Questions and Answers**



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Thank You

