



July 15, 2020

RE: Workplace testing for COVID-19

Dear Employer:

As your local Public Health Authority, we would like to clarify expectations of businesses for COVID-19 testing of employees.

We **do not** support requiring proof of negative COVID-19 test results as a condition of reopening or returning to work, especially in light of limited testing capacity at this time.

When someone tests positive for COVID-19, local public health officials will work directly with them on a time-based approach to determine when they may safely return to work after illness. Therefore, a COVID-19 test to return to work is duplicative and not necessary.

However, we **may** recommend return to work testing for employees of long-term care facilities.

Additionally, if there are at least two positive COVID-19 cases related to your worksite Public Health will work with you to determine if other staff require testing.

For the sake of your business and employees, please make sure you have a plan for testing your staff in the event of an outbreak and if directed by Public Health. The plan may include having insured staff go to their usual health care provider or contracting with a health system for testing.

If you contract for, or provide direct testing to employees, you must ensure:

- Employees are notified of results promptly, whether negative or positive, and
- Employees with positive test results get education from a medically-trained individual. This education should include what medical care to seek based on symptoms and how to otherwise protect their families and household members.

Public Health will make the determination of when an employee can safely return to work

Please see additional information below and thank you for your partnership.

Sarah Present, MD, MPH
Clackamas County Health Officer

Ways to protect your workplace from COVID-19 infection

- Screen employees for symptoms of COVID-19 at the beginning of each shift (e.g., asking if an employee has had cough, fever, shortness of breath, or is otherwise feeling unwell).
- Encourage employees to stay home when ill and provide leave policies that allow for this. Stopping the transmission of COVID-19 is key to stopping outbreaks. Fourteen days paid leave for all suspected or confirmed cases will shorten the outbreak, be cost effective, and prevent illness and deaths in the long run.
- Require employees to wear masks or face coverings and maintain 6 feet of physical distance from others.
- Encourage frequent handwashing.
- Disinfect the workplace frequently.
- Make arrangements for staggered meal and break schedules so that there is plenty of space while people are eating (masks off).

What else should you know about outbreak response at work sites

- You will need to provide local public health officials with a list of names/dates of birth of individuals tested, test results, and phone numbers for those who test positive. This information can be shared with us without a medical release under existing Oregon public health statutes. Public health statutes include strict privacy controls.
- The Oregon Health Authority will release the name of your work site on its web site if you employ more than 30 people and have 5 or more cases. If the media asks for more information, we will share minimal details and will work directly with you if their interest is high.

Visit www.clackamas.us/coronavirus for more information.