GUIDANCE FOR INDUSTRY-INITIATED COVID-19 TESTING

Overview

Industry-initiated COVID-19 testing includes all COVID-19 testing requested and paid for by a private enterprise for their employees, contractors, or clients. This document has been developed to outline the parameters and guidelines for conducting these tests.

COVID-19 Testing Parameters and Risk Mitigations

Required Parameters	• All industry-initiated COVID-19 testing must follow the processes and procedures outlined in the attached Industry-Initiated COVID-19 Testing and Reporting Quick Reference Card. • Positive COVID-19 diagnostic test results must be reported according to the procedures outlined in the Quick Reference Card. • Reporting of negative COVID-19 diagnostic test results is at the discretion of the Chief Medical Officer of Health and the Zone Medical Officer of Health. • Industry-initiated testing will be suspended if supplies and/or testing capacity are in short supply and need to be allocated to public testing efforts for priority clinical purposes. • Industry-initiated COVID-19 testing does not remove the obligation of employers to abide by the public orders issued by the Chief Medical Officer of Health, as well as adhere to industry- specific guidance posted on Biz Connect. • Personal and health information must be collected, used, disclosed, and protected by any applicable privacy laws, including *the Personal Information Protection Act* (PIPA), the *Health Information Act* (HIA), and the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIP).
Guidelines for Laboratories Providing Testing	• Laboratories contracted to perform tests on individuals working in Alberta must abide by the Government of Alberta's conditions, including adherence to these guidelines and the relevant procedures outlined in the Quick Reference Card. • Laboratories used to conduct diagnostic testing in Alberta must be accredited by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta or the equivalent in the jurisdiction in which the laboratory is located. • All testing must be performed on Health Canada-approved technologies and used in compliance with testing guidelines issued by Chief Medical Officer of Health. This applies to molecular methods, antibody/serology tests, and antigen tests. • At this time, no antibody test can confirm or prove immunity to COVID-19. • Labs should provide industry clients with guidance for interpretation and application of COVID-19 test results that aligns with provincial public health guidelines.
Guidelines for Companies Seeking Testing	• Companies using point-of-care/rapid COVID-19 tests must follow the relevant procedures outlined in the Quick Reference Card. All testing must be performed on Health Canada-approved technologies and used in compliance with testing guidelines issued by Chief Medical Officer of Health. This applies to molecular methods, antibody/serology tests, and antigen tests. • Companies will be responsible for all costs related to enhanced and expanded testing they initiate. • COVID-19 testing must be performed on a voluntary basis, with worker consent. • Employers should seek legal advice on issues of human rights, labour and employment law, privacy, health information, and occupational health and safety before implementing a testing program. Based on this advice, employers should develop a company policy related to COVID-19 testing. • A negative result on a diagnostic test for COVID-19 is a point-in-time result. It does not guarantee that the individual is not contagious or will not become contagious shortly. All necessary precautions such as physical distancing, use of masks, daily symptom screening, staying home when sick, etc. should be maintained even after a negative result on a diagnostic test.

GUIDANCE FOR INDUSTRY-INITIATED COVID-19 TESTING
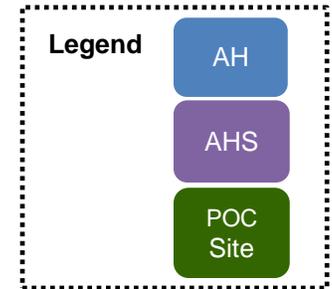
	• A positive result on a COVID-19 serology test does not guarantee that an individual is protected from further infection. All necessary precautions such as physical distancing, use of masks, daily symptom screening, staying home when sick, should be maintained regardless of the serology test result.
	• Companies should not use the results of an antibody test to inform work assignments or other employee management activities, based on an individual being confirmed as immune to COVID-19 unless the test has been approved by Health Canada for confirming immunity to COVID-19.
	• It is recommended that companies assess their need for liability insurance in case of illness or injury to an employee, contractor, or client related to the testing program.
References	• The FOIP-PIPA Help Desk can answer questions and provide information related to a private sector organization's obligations under PIPA. The FOIP-PIPA Help Desk can be reached at 780-427-5848 or SA.AccessAndPrivacy@gov.ab.ca.
	• For general information about the HIA, the HIA Help Desk can be contacted by phone at 780-427-8089 or by email at HiaHelpDesk@gov.ab.ca.
Attachment	• Industry-Initiated COVID-19 Testing and Reporting Quick Reference Card, including sample letters that organizations can use to follow up with clients.

Industry-Initiated COVID-19 Testing and Reporting   Quick Reference Card
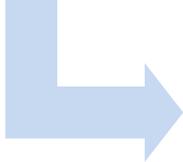
Testing of any kind must be considered voluntary and informed consent must be obtained. A COVID-19 test represents a single point-in-time result and other public health measures including physical distancing, masking, cleaning, and isolating when ill are still required.

Rapid Point-of-Care Testing: Performed at a Point-of-Care (POC) Site (e.g. OH & S), not an accredited laboratory. This is not a diagnostic test, and is considered to be outside of provincially implemented testing processes and platforms.
Results do not need to be reported and should not be reported to the Chief Medical Officer of Health or the Zone Medical Officer of Health.

Legend	
	AH
	AHS
	POC Site

1. Positive Result Identified

- Rapid test result is identified as positive
  - These results will <u>not</u> be included in provincial surveillance and reporting

2. Direct to AHS testing

- Direct client to access public lab testing through <u>AHS self-assessment</u> or calling 811 for confirmatory testing
- Ordering clinician:
  - instructs client to isolate pending results of the confirmatory test by the public lab
  - provides patient with a letter indicating that they have a POC positive result to support any clinical care decision making within the community, acute care, or other settings (See Appendix A for a sample letter)

<u>Notes</u>:

1. Contact tracing
   a) Contact tracing will not be initiated by AHS Public Health based on the POC result.
   b) Employers should advise the case, and can advise contacts of the case within the workplace, to isolate based on the POC result. They will be responsible for providing information regarding expectations if there are discrepant results between the POC and publicly provided testing.
2. If there is a discrepancy between the private rapid/POC test results and the public test result, the publicly provided test result is the source of truth for public health management.
3. If an outbreak is declared, testing will need to be completed by a public lab and AHS will coordinate follow-up with the site and case as required.

Industry-Initiated COVID-19 Testing and Reporting

Quick Reference Card

Private Accredited Lab Reporting: Performed by a private accredited lab.

Legend
- AH
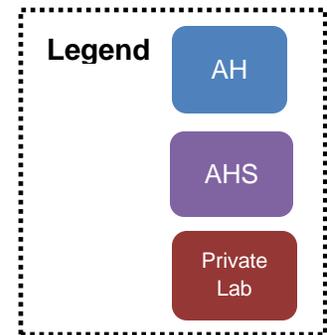- AHS
- Private Lab

1. Fax Positive Result
- Positive/corrected COVID-19 result processed for Albertan/considered within provincial jurisdiction
- Fax lab of a positive/corrected COVID-19 result <u>within 24 hrs</u> to Alberta Health (AH) (780-415-9609) **and** Alberta Health Services (AHS) (780-342-0248)
- Provide client with Private Accredited Lab Results Letter (See Appendix B for a sample letter)

A

2. Enter into PSI
- AH Communicable Disease Team receives fax and enters case into the Provincial Surveillance Information (PSI) system for reporting

B

3. Enter into CD/OM
- AHS receives fax and creates Disease Incident for positive case in CD/OM for follow-up

<u>Notes</u>:

1. If asymptomatic testing is being recommended by an employer for business continuity or operational purposes, the employer is responsible for ensuring that the test is approved by Health Canada and in accordance with any guidance set out by Alberta Health. Industry should be referred to https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/covid-19-relaunch-guidance-industry-initiated-covid-19-testing.pdf for further guidance.
2. Private testing should only be conducted for asymptomatic clients. Clients with COVID-19 symptoms should access testing through public testing processes.
3. Privately ordered test results will not be delivered through standard lab reporting processes or available in electronic databases (e.g. Millennium, the Lab Information System, or Netcare); however, they will be included as cases as part of provincial surveillance and reporting.
4. All testing for outbreaks, case and contact management, and for symptomatic persons should be done using public testing processes.
5. A lab report will include one client per report with the minimum data set.
6. Corrected reports include:
   a) A positive result corrected to a negative;
   b) An error made where the specimen does not belong to the client on the report.

Accredited Lab Result Minimum Data Set   *Mandatory Field

Client Demographics:	Comments
ULI - AB Unique lifetime identifier or Other Identifier (e.g MRN) *	ULI preferred if available
Client Last Name*	
Client First Name*	
Client Date of Birth*	
Client Gender*	
Client Street Address*	If available
Client Municipality*	
Client Province*	
Client Country*	
Client Postal Code*	
Lab Chart Details:	
Submitting Lab Name*	
Lab Phone Number	
Lab Accession Number*	
Specimen Collection Date and Time*	Note: Date and Time preferred
Specimen Arrival (at lab) Date and Time	Note: Date and Time preferred
Specimen Results Available Date and Time	Note: Date and Time preferred
Specimen Source or Type*	
Type of Test	e.g. What platform
Lab Test or Test Ordered*	e.g. COVID-19
Result of Test*	e.g. Positive, Detected, etc.
Outbreak EI Number	If available (e.g. 2020-123 or 2020-EDM-123)
Employer Name	If not available as a separate field, please indicate in Order Comments
Employer Medical Lead Phone Number	If not available as a separate field, please indicate in Order Comments
Facility Site Name and Address	If not available as a separate field, please indicate in Order Comments
Order Comments (if applicable)	

Appendix A – Point-of-Care Preliminary Results Letter

«Date_Letter_Generated»

«AddressBlock»

Dear «First_Name»:

This letter is in follow up to your recent **Point-of-Care/Rapid Test** for COVID-19 done at «Name_of_
_Site or OH & S Service».

Your COVID-19 test of «Date_of_Test» was positive for COVID-19. **These results are considered
preliminary** and require further confirmatory testing through a public health lab. Please arrange for an
additional COVID-19 test through Alberta Health Services. Appointments can be booked online at
www.ahs.ca/covid.

Because of this preliminary positive result, you should isolate until you are tested through a public
health lab, and receive your results.

Any person with cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose, or sore throat that is not related to a
pre-existing illness or health condition is legally required to isolate for a minimum of 10 days from the
start of symptoms, or until symptoms resolve, whichever is longer.

Information on isolation requirements in Alberta can be found at alberta.ca/isolation.

For more information on COVID-19, please visit alberta.ca/covid.

Sincerely,

«First_Name_Last_Name»«Designation»
«Name_of_Site or OHS Service»

Appendix B – Private Accredited Lab Results Letter

«Date_Letter_Generated»

«AddressBlock»

Dear «First_Name»:

This letter is in follow up to your recent test for COVID-19 done by «Name_of_Private _Lab».

Your COVID-19 test of «Date_of_Test» was positive for COVID-19. These results will not be available in the public lab system. Please take this letter with you if you present for medical care.

You are legally required to isolate for a minimum of 10 days from the date the lab testing was done. If you subsequently develop symptoms you are required to complete the 10 day isolation period, or remain on isolation until symptoms resolve, whichever is longer.

Information on isolation requirements in Alberta can be found at alberta.ca/isolation.

For more information on COVID-19, please visit alberta.ca/covid.

Sincerely,

«First_Name_Last_Name»«Designation»
«Name_of_Site or OHS Service»