

Antigen Point-of-Care Testing in Ontario: Updated Policies and Regulations

FAQs

1. The province recently expanded eligibility for access to free COVID-19 antigen point-of-care test kits. What is the new eligibility policy?

Any organization that is permitted to open as permitted under the *Reopening Ontario Act* and where individuals must be physically present on site may be eligible to receive antigen point-of-care test kits free of charge from the government of Ontario.

Organizations are encouraged to find out more about accessing tests kits on the [COVID-19 Testing for Organizations page through the Ontario Together website.](#)

2. The province recently amended regulations under the Health Protection and Promotion Act (Regulation 569) to remove the requirement that organizations performing antigen point-of-care testing must report preliminary positive results to Public Health Units. What is a preliminary positive test result?

Antigen point-of-care tests are used for asymptomatic screening purposes only. Antigen point-of-care tests should therefore not be used for diagnosis of COVID-19 infection in symptomatic individuals or individuals with known contact with a positive COVID-19 case.

A positive result on an antigen point-of-care test is therefore only considered a preliminary positive and must be followed up with a confirmatory laboratory-based PCR test within 24 hours. Any individual who receives a positive result on an antigen point-of-care test must also self-isolate until the result of a confirmatory lab-based PCR test is known.

There is no change to the requirement that positive results from lab-based PCR tests be reported to Public Health Units.

3. Do results from antigen point-of-care tests still need to be verified by a lab-based PCR test?

In the case of antigen point-of-care tests, positive results are considered preliminary and require an individual to seek confirmatory, lab-based PCR testing at an assessment centre and isolate until the results of the confirmatory test are known. The results of a confirmatory lab-based PCR test are considered the conclusive, diagnostic result. These requirements are captured within the publicly-available [provincial guidance on rapid antigen screening](#) from the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

Negative results on an antigen point-of-care test do not require confirmatory lab-based PCR testing. However, for those with a negative result, it should be reinforced that an antigen point-of-care test result could be negative, when in fact the individual may be positive for COVID-19 (i.e. a false negative result). Individuals with a negative test result should continue to follow all public health measures, including mask wearing, social distancing, hand hygiene, and staying home if they are sick.

4. What measures are in place to ensure that individuals with a preliminary positive test are taking appropriate action if there is no longer a requirement that preliminary positive results be reported to Public Health Units?

Clear requirements for the action individuals must take if they have received a positive result on an antigen point-of-care test are outlined in the publicly posted [provincial testing guidance](#) from the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

Current provincial guidance requires that any individual who receives a preliminary positive result on an antigen point-of-care test must immediately seek a confirmatory, lab-based PCR test and self-isolate until

the results of that lab-based PCR test are known. This requirement applies not only to individuals who have been tested through participation in a provincial antigen screening program (e.g. the Provincial Antigen Screening Program) but also to any individual seeking privately initiated antigen screening.

Furthermore, this requirement has been reinforced in additional program documentation distributed to all sites receiving free antigen point-of-care test kits from the Province to ensure that appropriate measures are taken in response to a preliminary positive result on an antigen point-of-care test.

5. In addition to removing the requirement to report preliminary positive results on antigen point-of-care tests to Public Health Units, the province has also streamlined the programmatic reporting requirements for organizations implementing testing using the test kits provided free of charge from the government. What data are sites now required to report to the province?

Participating sites are required to submit a very small dataset weekly through a centralized [online portal](#). All data is aggregate-level and does not include any personal health information. The metrics required for weekly reporting are as follows:

- Number of antigen point-of-care test kits used.
- Number of invalid antigen point-of-care test results.
- Number of individuals who tested positive with an antigen point-of-care test.
- Number of individuals who tested negative with an antigen point-of-care test.

6. The province has streamlined requirements related to the disposal of biohazardous waste for rapid antigen screening under the Environmental Protection Act (EPA). What specific requirements have been removed?

A site utilising (and disposing of) rapid tests and their operators are defined as a “waste generation facility” and waste “generator”, respectively under Regulation 347 of the EPA. The following regulatory obligations imposed on site generators have been removed:

- **Registration:** submitting an initial Generator Registration Report to the Director (under the EPA) before transferring waste from the site.
- **Manifesting:** completing a manifest in respect of the waste that is leaving the site.

7. Which requirements are still in place for sites using rapid antigen tests under the EPA?

- **Storage and handling:** The operator and owner of the site must store, handle and maintain the waste so as to prevent leaks or spills, and not store the waste for a period exceeding 24 months.
- **Hiring an approved waste transportation system:** The generator must only transfer waste offsite using a registered waste transportation hauler. See below list of registered waste transportation haulers:

Company Name	Site Name	Site Municipality	Phone
Drain-All Ltd.	2705 Stevenage Drive	Ottawa	(613)739-1070
Stericycle Inc.	95 Deerhurst Drive, Units 3 and 4	Brampton	(905)789-6660
Daniels Sharpsmart Canada Limited	52 Bramsteele Road	Brampton	(905)793-2966
Stericycle, ULC	19 Armthorpe Road	Brampton	(905)595-2651
Covanta Environmental Solutions Ontario, Inc.	Quantex Technologies Inc.	Kitchener	(519)748-5348

ECS Cares Incorporated	47 Churchill Drive	Barrie	(800)263-1857
First Response Environmental (2012) Inc.	1650 Upper Ottawa Street	Hamilton	(866)774-5501
Greenflow Environmental Services Inc.	4151 Morris Drive	Burlington	(905)333-3004
Octagon Medical Services Ltd.	4 Cardico Drive	Whitchurch-Stouffville	(905)888-5851 ext. 102

8. What are the disposal requirements for facilities that have waste from the antigen testing kits?

Facility operators are encouraged to follow the manufacturer instructions for safe use of COVID-19 antigen point-of-care kits and associated wastes. The following is general guidance for the proper storage and handling of this waste:

- The waste must be stored in containers to prevent leaks or spills and maintained in a way that prevents damage or deterioration of the container.
- The waste should be segregated from all other wastes by depositing it into an appropriate container with the appropriate yellow universal biohazard label.
- The waste should be stored in a secure area, not accessible to the general public, and not adjacent to supply storage areas or areas used for food preparation or consumption.

Facility operators must only transfer waste offsite using a registered waste transportation hauler. Waste management carriers may be able to assist with guidance on proper disposal options.