



COVID-19 Rapid Testing in the Workplace

Resource Guide for BC Tourism & Hospitality Employers



Updated Feb 2022

Introduction

Though access to COVID-19 rapid test kits is becoming increasingly available across Canada, individuals authorized to administer rapid tests differs from one jurisdiction to the next and program eligibility will vary. Employers are encouraged to ensure that they are aware and follow the required regulations of their province or territory.

Tourism and hospitality employers who are considering rapid testing as an option for employees in their workplaces should be aware that doing so requires time, resources and careful consideration in order to ensure that they understand and follow provincial regulations. Depending on each organization's situation it may not be an appropriate or cost-effective solution for every employer.

This resource guide contains practical information and links to help employers identify and access COVID-19 Rapid Response screening tests and program support options. The information within this document is accurate as of the date of publishing and will be revised as additional programs and/or information becomes available.

Should you have any questions or need additional guidance, please feel free to contact us: hr@go2hr.ca

COVID-19 Rapid Tests

- COVID-19 [Rapid detection tests \(RADTs, or rapid tests\)](#) can be used to quickly screen people in select settings to reduce the chances of outbreaks and control the spread of COVID-19
- When used regularly, rapid tests may help identify individuals who may be infectious early on
- Provide another layer of protection to assist in keeping workplaces safe
- Are **not a replacement for other COVID-19 workplace safety protocols or Public Health measures** including hand-hygiene, physical distancing, enhanced cleaning and disinfecting practices, mandatory mask use, etc. Symptom screening must continue to be in place.
- Are only for use with individuals who are pre-symptomatic or asymptomatic (without symptoms) of COVID-19
- Can be performed in the workplace by trained individuals or health professionals
- Provide on-site results, usually within 15 to 20 minutes
- Are generally less accurate at detecting COVID-19 infection than standard [polymerase chain reaction \(PCR\)](#) testing
- Individuals who receive a positive rapid test result should seek a PCR test as soon as possible for a confirmatory diagnosis. Please follow all isolation and quarantine advice given by public health officials while you wait for test results

How to Access COVID-19 Rapid Tests – BC Employers

Employers in the BC tourism and hospitality industry who are interested in accessing COVID-19 Rapid test kits and establishing onsite COVID-19 rapid screening programs for asymptomatic employees currently have the following options, as outlined below:

1. Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA) program
2. [Safe Screen BC program](#)
3. Federal Government of Canada
4. Canadian Red Cross Stop the Spread and Stay Safe program

COVID-19 Rapid Testing Programs – Options & Insights for BC Tourism & Hospitality Employers

	Pharmacy Rapid Test Distribution	Safe Screen BC Program	Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA) Program	Federal Government Program	Stop the Spread and Stay Safe Program
Program Overview	Programs for eligible businesses that would like to access rapid antigen tests and establish onsite rapid COVID-19 workplace screening programs for employees with no symptoms (asymptomatic).				
About the Program	Small and medium organizations in BC can access rapid COVID-19 tests through authorized pharmacies in BC, for workplace screening initiatives.	The BC Business Council’s Safe Screen BC program provides businesses with the toolkits, resources and guidance needed to access rapid antigen tests and set-up onsite rapid COVID-19 workplace screening programs for employees only .	The Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA) program provides businesses with the resources needed to access rapid antigen tests and set-up onsite rapid COVID-19 workplace screening programs for employees only . The PHSA program is intended to be the provincial equivalent of the federal government program. All of the rapid test kits in BC have been procured by the federal government.	The Federal government COVID-19 Rapid Testing and Screening in the Workplace program provides access to rapid antigen testing for eligible large employers, for employees only .	The Canadian Red Cross Stop the Spread and Stay Safe Program provides training, guidance and support for charities and non-profits to access rapid antigen tests and set-up onsite rapid COVID-19 workplace screening programs for employees and volunteers only .
Eligibility	Incorporated businesses 10-199 employees Operate in an industry that is currently open under provincial guidelines	Businesses (& not non-profits) with: Workplace settings where employees cannot maintain physical distancing Service-orientated businesses where employees have frequent close contact interactions with customers Businesses located in regions with higher levels of community transmission Ski employers are eligible to participate	Tourism and hospitality employers that provide staff accommodations are considered a priority setting and are eligible. Other businesses that meet the definition of ‘close-contact’ are also eligible. <i>Close-contact employees are simply defined as having regular in-person interactions with other employees and/or customers.</i> Some industry employers, including ski have successfully applied for this program. See the Employer Insights section below for information	Businesses and not-for-profits are eligible to apply to receive free rapid tests from Health Canada. They are currently prioritizing employers with 200+ employees. Generally, this intake portal has been used by large organizations >200 employees that are operating across multiple provinces.	Charities, non-profits & indigenous community organizations with employees in BC: Have staff/volunteers working in close proximity with each other in a physical location AND/OR interacting with clients in-person Are willing to operate a screening program which asks that personnel take rapid tests twice weekly Report the results of the tests (anonymized) to the Canadian Red Cross every 2 weeks.

	Pharmacy Rapid Test Distribution	Safe Screen BC	Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA)	Federal Government	Stop the Spread and Stay Safe									
Cost	<p>Yes</p> <p>While test kits are provided for free by the Government of Canada, pharmacies may charge up to \$14 per kit as a handling and training fee.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>The SafeScreen BC program facilitates access to the provincial supply and while the test kits are free this is a fee-based program with other supports provided.</p> <p>Cost is based on total number of employers, contractors and personnel in BC:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Small</td> <td>15 or less</td> <td>\$100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Medium</td> <td>16-100</td> <td>\$1,500</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Large</td> <td>100+</td> <td>\$25,000</td> </tr> </table> <p>Cost does not change if only a portion of employees to be tested</p> <p>In some situations, organizations may be able to apply for specific areas of their business (e.g. specific franchise locations)</p> <p>This is a one-time fee to cover the first 4 months of Safe Care BC support to assist with program set up. After the initial 4 months, employers can reorder additional tests at no cost through this program</p> <p>Fees do not include shipping/courier costs to ship test kits from Delta, BC (also available for pick up)</p>	Small	15 or less	\$100	Medium	16-100	\$1,500	Large	100+	\$25,000	<p>No</p> <p>The provincial and federal government programs provide the test kits free of charge however there may be other costs associated with implementing the program the organization will be responsible for.</p> <p>E.g. shipping/courier costs must be covered by the organization</p>	<p>No</p> <p>The provincial and federal government programs provide the test kits free of charge however there may be other costs associated with implementing the program the organization will be responsible for.</p>	<p>No</p> <p>This program provides the test kits free of charge however there may be other costs associated with implementing the program the organization will be responsible for (e.g. staff time to implement, run the program).</p>
Small	15 or less	\$100												
Medium	16-100	\$1,500												
Large	100+	\$25,000												

	Pharmacy Rapid Test Distribution	Safe Screen BC	Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA)	Federal Government	Stop the Spread and Stay Safe
What's Included:	<p>This program only provides employers with access to Rapid testing kits</p> <p>Each organization is responsible for:</p> <p>Ensuring compliance with the BC COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Screening Program Guidelines and Requirements</p> <p>Identifying staffing needed to administer their program</p> <p>Purchase their own PPE</p>	<p>Eligible employers who register and pay a fee receive:</p> <p>Free rapid antigen tests provided by the Government of Canada</p> <p>Readiness training to help employers understand how to fulfill application criteria and meet requirements for a COVID-19 POC screening site</p> <p>Guidance through the application process for the PHSA program and to answer questions</p> <p>Tools and support to set up rapid antigen screening in the workplace</p> <p>Assists with training materials and training sessions to launch a program (e.g. standard operating procedures, reference guides)</p> <p>Access to a reporting platform to help meet public health reporting requirements</p>	<p>On approval for the program, the Rapid POC Team will assist with inquiries and there is also a Help Desk team that supports training. Templates and detailed instructions are provided.</p> <p>While the test kits and supports through the program are free, each organization is responsible for:</p> <p>Identifying the staffing needed to administer their program</p> <p>Purchase their own PPE</p> <p>Ensuring compliance with the BC COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Screening Program Guidelines and Requirements</p>	<p>Eligible organizations must agree to the following conditions:</p> <p>Keep rapid tests and not resell them</p> <p>limit use to within Canada</p> <p>Screen employees according to the guidelines provided by relevant provincial and territorial governments</p> <p>Demonstrate they are using these tests before further supplies are provided</p> <p>Collect and report on usage</p>	<p>On approval for the program, eligible employers receive:</p> <p>Free rapid antigen tests provided by the Government of Canada</p> <p>Training on how to administer rapid antigen tests</p> <p>Guidance on how to set up a screening program to administer the rapid antigen tests – tips, tools, training and support for implementing a screening program in your organization</p> <p>Access to a call centre and tailored supports by a team of experts including webinars with experts to support your program</p>
Existing Health Measures	<p>When a Rapid screening program is in place, this does not replace or allow for the relaxing of COVID-19 Safety protocols as required by the Provincial Health Officer or other public health measures (e.g. personal protective equipment, barriers, handwashing, physical distancing).</p>				

	Pharmacy Rapid Test Distribution	Safe Screen BC	Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA)	Federal Government	Stop the Spread and Stay Safe
Training		Training provided for employees who will conduct POC Rapid testing, to ensure compliance with BC requirements	Organizations that enter into the legal agreement with PHSA are able to enrol in a free ‘train the trainer’ session. The training takes place via Zoom and those that complete the training are then responsible for training others within their organization. These are scheduled through contacting the Help Desk team.		Training provided for employees who will conduct testing
Reporting	Employers are responsible for complying with reporting obligations to health authorities and the BC government	Program provides employers with access to a technology solution to help automate and comply with reporting to health authorities and the BC government	Employers are responsible for complying with reporting obligations to health authorities and the BC government	Employers are responsible for complying with reporting obligations to health authorities and the BC government	Guidance provided
Legislative Compliance & Requirements	Approved organizations must agree to terms and conditions with the Government of Canada One of the schedules in the agreement is the BC COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Screening Program Guidelines and Requirements They must also agree to the terms and conditions of the pharmacy that they work with	Program provides guidance for businesses to help maintain current knowledge Organizations will be required to enter into an agreement with the Provincial Health Services Authority	Approved organizations must sign a legal agreement with PHSA. One of the schedules in the agreement is the BC COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Screening Program Guidelines and Requirements	Employers will be required to enter into a legal agreement and ensure compliance with the program	Guidance provided

	Pharmacy Rapid Test Distribution	Safe Screen BC	Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA)	Federal Government	Stop the Spread and Stay Safe
Get Started	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Register your organization online through the Health Canada registration 2. Review and sign the BC Letter of Agreement and email it to rapidpocregistrybc@phsa.ca You will receive a confirmation email. Please keep the email for the pharmacist to review. 3. Review Abbott Panbio™ COVID-19 Antigen Rapid Test (nasal) guidelines and requirements and competency assessment/checklist in Appendix I 4. Print a copy of the competency assessment 5. Review the list of participating pharmacies 6. Take your competency assessment to the pharmacy and a pharmacist will help you complete the assessment. 	<p>Safe Screen BC hosts information sessions to provide further details on the program and rapid screening more generally.</p> <p>Register to attend a 45-minute information session</p> <p>On completion of the session you will receive additional information about the program and next steps</p>	<p>Email RapidPOCTeam@phsa.ca for an intake assessment to apply</p> <p>Processing time is approx. 2 weeks. Varies depending on if details need to be clarified/revised etc. so some intakes may be processed in less time.</p>	<p>Apply online here</p> <p>Based on an organization's location and number of employees, they will either provide approval through this federal program or direct you to the most suitable source of rapid tests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - provincial or territorial government (e.g. Safe Screen BC) - distribution partners (e.g. Canadian Red Cross) 	<p>Register or complete the application process here.</p> <p>If your organization pre-registered, use your credentials to login to the application portal.</p>
Timeline to Launch		The time it takes for an employer to be up and running with a rapid screening program will vary by organization and depend on their capacity to plan and implement and identify the individuals responsible for overseeing the program at their worksite(s).			

	Pharmacy Rapid Test Distribution	Safe Screen BC	Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA)	Federal Government	Stop the Spread and Stay Safe
Industry Employers Insights	<p>We want to hear from you</p> <p>Thought we have been in touch with a number of employers about rapid testing, we have yet to hear of any that are using this program.</p> <p>If you have experience with the Pharmacy Rapid Test distribution program in BC and are willing to share your wisdom and insights with other industry employers, please contact us!</p>	<p>Hotel Zed (Tofino)</p> <p>Requires employees living in staff housing to either show proof of double vaccination or participate in 2 rapid antigen tests per week. They have also successfully deployed rapid testing when we have had a known COVID case and could test close contacts (when Island Health was not offering testing for asymptomatic people). They believe this helped limit the spread to a handful of cases and their business to remain operational.</p> <p>They have now expanded test availability to all Accent and Zed locations for the purpose of limiting transmission within the staff group.</p> <p>Insights: The amount of documentation and paperwork can look quite daunting, but it is really structured to set up doing hundreds of tests a day. The actually operational manual is quite easy to update with your company and location information.</p>	<p>Copper Point Resort:</p> <p>Has successfully implemented a weekly rapid testing program for all of their employees using this program.</p> <p>Insights: Testing has been going well. Employees have agreed to be tested. They were worried recently about the availability of rapid testing kits as the demand for them increased. They did receive their order last week, though it took about 4 weeks.</p> <p>Sun Peaks Resort:</p> <p>Sun Peaks Resort was successful in being accepted for this rapid testing program however they have decided instead to implement a mandatory vaccination policy for all employees, volunteers and contractors effective Nov 12, 2021</p> <p>They are able to provide workplace accommodations for a few employees with valid medical exceptions for vaccinations (e.g. non-guest facing roles, mandatory masks, and other COVID-19 protocols – plexi-glass, distancing, hand hygiene, etc. so testing is not required)</p> <p>Tips: When completing the COVID-19 Point of Care (POC) Intake form for this program, they applied for the entire Sun Peaks Resort, specifically for Ski Patrol, Ski School & F&B, under the following:</p>	<p>We want to hear from you</p> <p>Thought we have been in touch with a number of employers about rapid testing, we have yet to hear of any that are using either of these programs.</p> <p>If you have experience with either program and are willing to share your wisdom and insights with other industry employers, please contact us!</p>	

		<p>The Cove Lakeside Resort</p> <p>Has recently applied to participate in this program. Watch for updates, we will provide additional information about their experience in the future.</p>	<p>Industry Sector: Arts, entertainment and recreation & Accommodation and food services</p> <p>Industry Subsector Code: 711, 712, 721, 722</p> <p>Big White:</p> <p>The leadership team at Big White considered rapid testing however have instead opted to implement a mandatory vaccination policy for their employees.</p>	
--	--	--	---	--

Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge and thank the following contributors to this resource:

Cynthia Thomas, Industry Safety Projects & Communications Manager
Canada West Ski Areas Association (CWSAA)

Marc White, Safety Manager
Sun Peaks Resort

Bill Slaney, Human Resources & Employee Experience Advisor
Big White Ski Resort Ltd

Bill Kirkpatrick, General Manager
Copper Point Resort

Brent Lavery, General Manager
The Cove Lakeside Resort

Natalie Corbett
Director of Continuous Improvement
Accent Inns / Hotel Zed / Roar

Additional Resources & Information

[BCCDC - Rapid COVID-19 Point of Care Screening Program](#)

BC Centres for Disease Control (BCCDC) overview of COVID-19 Rapid screening options in BC

[COVID-19 Rapid Testing and Screening in the Workplace](#)

Federal government initiative to provide free rapid antigen tests to eligible businesses and non-profits

[Essential Services Contingency Reserve \(ESCR\)](#)

Eligible organizations (including [Essential service sectors](#)) can receive **free personal protective equipment** (PPE), non medical masks and disinfection products from the government, while supplies last.

[Preparing for testing and PPE - YouTube](#) (3:40 mins)

Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA) video that provides an overview of the supplies needed for testing, how to prepare your area and the appropriate infection, prevention and control practices including personal protective equipment (PPE)

[Requirements_POC_screening.pdf](#)

BC Centres for Disease Control (BCCDC) checklist of requirements that employers need to have in place, in order to conduct on-site POC rapid testing