



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Washington, D.C. 20230

COVID-19 Testing Program

DOC COVID-19 Coordination Team

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Introduction

In accordance with Safer Federal Workforce guidance regarding testing for federal employees, the Department of Commerce (DOC) established a **COVID-19 Testing Program**.

Testing will be available according to mission needs as directed by to the Safer Federal Workforce (SFW) Task Force, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC), and other sources of Federal guidance.

According to the CDC, there are two types of testing for COVID-19. **Point-in-time tests** are intended to identify people with COVID-19 who are asymptomatic and do not have known, suspected, or reported exposure to SARS-CoV-2. Point-in-time testing helps to identify unknown cases so that measures can be taken to prevent further transmission. **Diagnostic tests** help identify current infection in individuals, including those with signs or symptoms consistent with COVID-19 and/or following recent known or suspected exposure.

Given operational and administrative considerations associated with differing roles, functions, or work environments, bureaus are required to adhere to the following general principles in implementing their testing and protocols:

Point-in-Time Testing

- DOC does not implement point-in-time testing when COVID-19 Community Levels are LOW, or for settings, roles, and functions within DOC facilities that are not considered high-risk.
- DOC, according to mission and operational needs, may implement point-in-time testing procedures that do not differentiate among individuals based on COVID-19 vaccination status in high-risk settings.
- Bureaus that implement a point-in-time testing program should do so in coordination with the Department and the SFW Task Force and should remain up to date with all Federal guidance related to point-in-time testing.

- Employees enrolled in a point-in-time testing program should be tested at least twice weekly for any week during which they work onsite or interact in person with members of the public as part of their job duties. The test can be both self-administered and self-read by the employee if the agency has the employee certify as to when they took the test and that they received a negative result.

Diagnostic Testing

- **When DOC requires diagnostic testing for employees, it provides employees with such diagnostic testing at no cost to the employee, such as through the screening testing program, in-house capabilities for diagnostic testing at the worksite, or through an alternative process the DOC determines.**
 - This includes any testing required for employees who have had probable or confirmed COVID-19 and who have been isolating, prior to such employees returning to a Federal workplace or interacting with the public as part of their official responsibilities.
- When CDC recommends that travelers *consider* COVID-19 testing for current SARS-CoV-2 infection with a viral test prior to or following travel, DOC employees traveling on official business should consider being tested consistent with such CDC guidance.
 - When CDC otherwise recommends or requires COVID-19 testing prior to or following travel, DOC requires employees traveling on official business be tested consistent with such CDC guidance, pursuant to Executive Order 13991.
 - DOC may provide any recommended testing and will provide for any required testing associated with official travel at no cost to the employee, such as through the screening testing program, in-house capabilities for diagnostic testing at the worksite, or through an alternative process determined by DOC.
 - The cost of such testing recommended or required for official travel, and not available through a Federal dispensary or not covered (or reimbursable) through travel insurance, can be claimed in a travel voucher as a Miscellaneous Expense under DOC travel policies.
- **DOC is not responsible for providing diagnostic testing to an individual as a result of a potential exposure that is not work-related.** An employee or contractor employee who comes into close contact with a person with COVID-19 outside of work should follow CDC guidelines for testing and quarantine consistent with their vaccination status.

Testing Results and Information

- Under Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) recordkeeping requirements, **if an employee tests positive for SARS-CoV-2 infection, the case must be recorded on the OSHA Illness and Injury Log** if each of the following conditions are met:
 - The case is a confirmed COVID-19 infection.

- The case is work-related (as defined by [29 CFR 1904.5](#)).
- The case involves one or more relevant recording criteria (set forth in [29 CFR 1904.7](#)) (e.g., medical treatment beyond first aid, days away from work, etc.).
- Any employee who tests positive must follow DOC Isolation Policy found on the [COVID-19 Information Hub](#).

Funding, Costs, and Duty Time

- **Bureaus are required to pay for the cost of testing pursuant to their programs.**
 - Bureaus are responsible for paying the cost of required testing should an employee visit another Federal agency if approved in advance.
 - Employees may also use free testing options if they otherwise meet the FDA authorization, individual Bureau, and documentation requirements.
- **Time spent on testing required by the program, including travel to an authorized site, is duty time.**
 - Employees do not need to take administrative leave for testing.
- Pre-approved testing expenses, if incurred, should be documented and submitted through normal reporting channels.

Simplified Overview

Situation	Covered Individuals	Testing Requirements	Allowable Tests	Time and Payment
Point-in-time Testing for Employees as Indicated by Bureau	Any employee covered in a bureau-sponsored point-in-time high-risk testing program	Employees must follow the bureau testing requirements applicable to their specific job function before working onsite or interacting in person with members of the public as part of their job duties.	In general, any FDA authorized test may be used for screening. Tests may be both self-administered and self-read. Tests or protocols should have a means of verifying the date and result of the test taken. Examples of allowable tests include point-of-care, in-house, and over-the-counter if observed by a designated agency person of contact or authorized telehealth provider. Given the priority of timely results, rapid antigen testing is the preferred method of screening. For unique situations, such as official travel, further standards may need to be met, including for international travel.	Bureaus are responsible for paying for the cost of testing pursuant to the program. Time spent on testing required by the program, including travel to an authorized testing site is considered duty time. Pre-approved testing expenses, if incurred, should be documented and submitted through normal reporting channels. Employees may also use free testing options if they otherwise meet the FDA authorization, individual Bureau, and documentation requirements.
Point-in-time Testing Required to Visit Another Agency	Employees visiting another agency in person who obtain approval in advance	Employees visiting another agency may be required to show proof of a negative COVID-19 test to gain entry.		
Point-in-time Testing Required for Official Travel	Employees approved for official travel	Employees traveling may need to provide testing results, particularly for entry to foreign countries, and may also need to seek testing upon return to meet CDC recommendations about testing after travel.		
Diagnostic Testing for Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19	Employees in isolation who need to test for COVID-19	Employees who have had probable or confirmed COVID-19 and who have been isolating, prior to such employees returning to a Federal workplace or interacting with the public as part of their official responsibilities.		