

Bulletin #2021-51

MUNICIPAL RELATIONS

Important Notice to All Elected Officials and Chief Administrative Officers

COVID-19 TESTING FOR DESIGNATED EMPLOYEES

To continue protecting the health and safety of all Manitobans from the spread of COVID-19, the Manitoba government is taking additional steps to ensure the safety and protection of provincial frontline workers and the individuals they serve.

On September 24, 2021, the Province announced a new public health order requiring rapid testing of designated front-line public servants who are not fully vaccinated. The order will come into effect on October 18, 2021. The order will require certain designated employees who have direct and ongoing or prolonged contact with vulnerable populations to provide proof of vaccination or take rapid COVID-19 tests in order to work. This includes municipal medical fire responders and paramedics who work for land emergency medical systems licensed under *The Emergency Medical Response and Stretcher Transportation Act*.

Municipalities may choose to include other categories of their employees in the scope of testing or proof of vaccination requirements, but are not obligated to do so. However, public health officials continue to recommend that other organizations follow the province's lead in implementing a testing or proof of vaccination requirement for their employees.

Under public health orders, the following process must be followed for designated employees.

- Employees who present proof that they are fully vaccinated will not be required to take rapid tests.
- Unvaccinated or partially vaccinated employees must present a negative COVID-19 test taken in the last 48 hours in order to work.
- If an employee tests positive using a rapid test, they must immediately self-isolate and obtain a PCR test from a provincial testing site. The employee must remain in self-isolation until they receive their test results.
 - If the employee receives a positive test result, they must self-isolate for 10 days, test negative again with a PCR test, and provide those test results to their employer in order to return to work.
 - If the employee receives a negative test result, they may return to work.

Employers can specify the manner in which employees are required to provide their proof of vaccination, rapid test results, or PCR test results.

Employers must ensure to protect the privacy and security of employees' personal information, such as their test results.

To view the public health order, visit:

https://manitoba.ca/asset_library/en/proactive/20212022/orders-soe-vaccination-testing-designated-persons-09242021.pdf.

To view workplace related resources, visit:

<https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/updates/resources.html#resources>

COVID-19 Rapid Testing Kits

Municipalities that have employees who are subject to the order or who choose to implement a testing or proof of vaccination policy for their employees must use an approved rapid testing kit. At this time, approved testing kits are the Abbott PanBio and BD Veritor COVID-19 antigen tests. Other types of COVID-19 rapid tests may be approved in the future.

Testing kits are related to operational requirements under the public health orders, and are not considered to be an enforcement action. As a result, any costs associated with testing kits, such as shipping and handling charges, are the sole responsibility of the requesting organization, similarly to other operational costs such as masks and signage. These costs are not eligible for funding through the Municipal Enforcement Support Program that provides financial and logistical support for the enforcement of public health orders.

Materials Distribution Agency COVID-19 Rapid Testing Kit Program

The Abbott PanBio COVID-19 Antigen Test is available in Manitoba from the Materials Distribution Agency (MDA). Municipalities requesting rapid testing kits from MDA must register for a rapid testing kit account, and may use this account to place orders for sub-organizations. Testing kits are available at no cost from MDA at this time. However, a nominal fee will apply for shipping and handling costs.

Additional information about the Abbott PanBio test, an MDA Rapid Testing Kit Client Account Number Registration Form, and the MDA Rapid COVID-19 Testing Order Form are included as attachments to this bulletin.

Should you have additional questions or concerns about the rapid testing kit program, including account setup and ordering, please contact MDA at 204-945-0570 or mda@gov.mb.ca.

Should you have additional questions about the public health orders and how they relate to municipal operations, please contact mrmaas@gov.mb.ca, or phone 204-945-2572.

DISCLAIMER

This bulletin is written solely for general information purposes. For the Public Health Order this bulletin is written in reference to, visit: https://manitoba.ca/asset_library/en/proactive/20212022/orders-soe-vaccination-testing-designated-persons-09242021.pdf