



ALAMEDA COUNTY HEALTH UPDATE

Replaces May 12, 2020 Health Advisory

Updated COVID-19 Testing Guidance for Alameda County – 08/17/2020

The following updated guidance for COVID-19 laboratory testing is intended to inform Alameda County Public Health Department (ACPHD) efforts to control the epidemic and aid decision-making by clinicians and other testing providers. The guidance identifies groups that should be prioritized for testing, but it is not a requirement to test in these groups. Testing decisions and policies must be flexible to account for ongoing limitations in testing resources and protective equipment. Clinical judgment should be used to guide testing of symptomatic¹ persons. ACPHD typically issues additional testing guidance for certain settings and situations, including outbreaks.

ACPHD has deployed dedicated teams to prevent and mitigate outbreaks in high risk congregate living facilities including skilled nursing facilities, residential care facilities for the elderly, correctional facilities, or homeless shelters. Testing protocols for residents and staff in these settings are specific to each situation or environment and may change from time to time.

Action Requested of Providers

Clinicians are encouraged to prioritize testing for COVID-19 in patients in accordance with the tiers listed below. The highest priority groups continue to include hospitalized patients, and persons identified for testing by ACPHD during case, contact, cluster or outbreak investigations.

Please refer to the following tiers for more information and detailed guidance about who should be prioritized for testing.

Tier One

- Hospitalized individuals and skilled nursing facility residents with COVID-19 symptoms.
- Investigation and management of outbreaks, under direction of ACPHD, which includes contact tracing investigations.

Tier Two

- All other individuals with COVID-19 symptoms.

¹ Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea.



- Close contacts of confirmed cases.* Note that close contacts who are required to quarantine must complete their 14-day quarantine period even if they test negative during that time.
- Individuals who are asymptomatic (having no symptoms of COVID 19), who fall into one of the following categories:
 1. Work in the health care sector and have frequent interactions with the public or with people who may have COVID-19 or have been exposed to SARS-CoV-2. The health care sector includes hospitals; skilled nursing facilities; long-term care facilities; ambulatory surgery centers; health care providers' offices; health care clinics; pharmacies; blood banks; dialysis centers; hospices; and, home health providers.
 2. Work in congregate care facilities, shelters for people experience homelessness, and residential care facilities for the elderly.
 3. Provide care to an elderly person or a person with a disability in the home, including a person providing care through California's In-Home Supportive Services Program.
 4. Work in the emergency services sector and have frequent interactions with the public or with people who may have COVID-19 or have been exposed to SARS-CoV-2. The emergency services sector includes police and public safety departments, fire departments, and emergency service response operations.
 5. Patients requiring pre-operative/pre-hospital admission screening.
 6. Patients being discharged from hospitals to lower levels of care.

Tier Three

- Individuals who work in the retail, manufacturing, or food manufacturing sectors (e.g., food production and processing facilities, slaughter facilities, harvesting sites or facilities, and food packing) who have frequent interactions with the public or who work in an environment where it is not practical to maintain at least six feet of space from other workers on a consistent basis.
- Workers who frequently have direct interactions with the public (e.g. mail carriers, providers of personal care services, and congregate living facility employees).
- Individuals who work in the food services sector who have frequent interactions with the public. The food services sector includes grocery stores, convenience stores, restaurants, and grocery or meal delivery services.
- Individuals who work in the public transportation sector who have frequent interactions with the public. The public transportation sector includes public transit, passenger rail service, passenger ferry service, public airports, and commercial airlines.
- Individuals who work in the education sector who have frequent interactions with students or the public. The education sector includes public and private childcare



establishments; public and private pre-kindergarten programs; primary and secondary schools; and public and private colleges and universities.

***Close Contacts**

A close contact is defined as someone who has been within 6 feet of someone with COVID-19 for longer than 15 minutes, with or without source control (i.e., face mask). All close contacts should be instructed to quarantine for 14 days and watch for symptoms. If they develop symptoms, they should consult a health care provider and seek testing.

Close Contacts Who Should be Tested for COVID-19

- The close contact is at higher risk for severe complications of COVID-19, either due to age (>50) or underlying medical conditions.
- The close contact lives with, or cannot avoid close contact with, someone at higher risk for severe complications of COVID-19.
- The close contact lives in a crowded household, so that it is difficult to safely distance from other household members. For example, more than two persons must sleep in the same room.
- The close contact lives or works in a setting where they might be at risk of exposing high-risk populations to COVID-19 identified in the tiers above.

Testing in the Workplace

- Testing in the workplace should be reserved for high risk settings or as needed per outbreak investigations. In most cases, employers should not require testing as a condition of starting a new job or returning to a newly reopened workplace setting.
- In accordance with [CDC guidelines](#), ACPHD recommends a symptom- and time-based approach for determining a safe return to work. A negative test is NOT required to return to work for individuals who have previously tested positive and have met time or symptom-based criteria for ending isolation. See [ACPHD Criteria for Release from Home Isolation and/or Quarantine and Return to Work](#).
- View [ACPHD Isolation vs. Quarantine Frequently Asked Questions](#) for more information.

Resources

- [ACPHD Reporting a COVID-19 Case to ACPHD](#)
- [ACPHD Testing Resources for the Community](#)
- [CDPH Updated COVID-19 Testing Guidance](#)



Alameda County Health Care Services Agency
Public Health Department
www.acphd.org

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Public Health Department: Main Line (510) 267-8000

COVID-19 Information: (510) 268-2101

- [CDC Criteria for Return to Work for Healthcare Personnel with SARS-CoV-2 Infection](#)

Local Health Department Reporting and Contact Information

- Alameda County Acute Communicable Disease Control:
 - Weekdays 8:30am–5pm Phone: (510) 267-3250
 - After hours Phone: (925) 422-7595 and ask for the public health duty officer on call
 - For non-immediate concerns, email nCoV@acgov.org
- Berkeley Public Health Division:
 - Weekdays 8am-5pm Phone: (510) 981-5292
 - After hours: Phone: (510) 981-5911 and ask for the Health Officer on call
- Contact Information for all other Local Health Jurisdictions is available online from CDPH