



OREGON FIRE SERVICE CORONAVIRUS TASKFORCE

1/19/2021 Information Bulletin 2021-1 Fire Service Assistance with COVID-19 Testing

The Oregon Fire Service Coronavirus Response Team is in consultation with the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) on opportunities within the Oregon Fire Service to expand the availability of COVID-19 testing across Oregon.

OHA has outlined two options for fire departments and districts to engage their staff and facilities to offer testing in the communities they serve – please see Page 2 of this bulletin.

As your agency evaluates these two options and determines how to partner with OHA, the OFSCRT offers the following considerations:

Community COVID-19 Testing Clinic Considerations:

- **Insurance Coverage** – connect with your insurance carrier to determine if coverage is adequate to address any risk or liability with offering a testing clinic on agency property
- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** – when conducting an OHA-sponsored testing clinic, work with OHA to receive an appropriate supply PPE to use during the testing clinic and to keep your agency's personnel protected.
- **Plans and Policies** – consider updating any pertinent agency policies or operational plans – including your workplace infection control and prevention plan – to address the potential risks and impacts of holding a testing clinic using agency resources.
- **Public Messaging** – Work with your PIO on messaging to educate and inform the public that fire stations may remain closed to the public during the testing clinic, how your agency will adhere to public health precautions during the clinic, and how responders will be kept isolated from the public during clinic activities
- **Site Selection** – Recommend using a station or facility that poses low exposure risk to staff and personnel, such as a substation, logistics facility, or training center and offers ample spacing to meeting physical distance requirements.
- **Staffing** – assess the needs of and impacts to your agency's personnel, including adequate response coverage, work/rest ratios, and behavioral health considerations.

Low-Barrier COVID-19 Testing at Fire Departments

The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) is actively recruiting fire departments as community COVID-19 testing partners.

Despite the delivery of the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines, it will take months to vaccinate enough of Oregon's population to contain the spread of COVID-19. Robust and accessible testing for COVID-19 continues to be a key component of Oregon's strategy to identify and slow the spread of disease and keep people who live in Oregon healthy.

Fire departments are trusted members of communities in Oregon. Many fire departments not only deliver fire prevention and suppression services, but also provide emergency medical services and are actively involved in many aspects of keeping their communities safe and healthy. As trusted providers of these key services, OHA believes fire departments are uniquely suited to deliver low-barrier, accessible COVID-19 testing to people who live in Oregon.

There are Two Options to Provide Community-Based Testing:

Rapid BinaxNOW Antigen Testing for Symptomatic Individuals

OHA will supply free BinaxNOW rapid antigen tests to any fire department who agrees to offer testing for their community.

These tests provide results in 15 minutes and work best at providing accurate results in people with symptoms consistent with COVID-19.

The BinaxNOW tests require a nasal swab but do not require a medical professional to administer. Interested fire departments will need a Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) certification or a CLIA waiver to perform. The CLIA application is available [here](#).

Fire departments will be responsible for reporting test results to local public health authorities and for ensuring test administrators have adequate personal protective equipment (PPE).

Community Testing Events

OHA will supply free self-administered COVID-19 test collection kits to fire departments interested in hosting low-barrier community testing events.

These COVID-19 tests require a self-administered nasal swab. After a collection event, specimens are sent to a laboratory and patients are notified of their results within a week.

Community testing events are free and open to all individuals, regardless of symptoms.

In addition to acting as the location for a testing event, fire departments will be responsible for providing personnel to coordinate and execute events, distribute tests, and observe the swabbing process.

For more information or to discuss the scheduling of a community testing opportunity, please contact:
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