

Rapid Antigen Testing (RAT) "Living with Covid"

Rapid Antigen Testing (RAT) is a surveillance tool that can identify Covid when it's at its most infectious. It's easier and faster to administer than PCR testing. The test itself is simple but the surveillance process around it must be set up well to ensure it is effective.

RAT helps confirm Covid-safe site and keeps the team working.



Possible uses

- Before travel between risk areas
- For unvaccinated teams or individuals
- Before entry into critical or vulnerable sites
- Surveillance of critical sites for business continuity



Frequency

- This can be determined based on risk
- Daily is good practice if risk is very high
- Twice/week minimum for site level confidence
- Before departing to high risk locations



Records / Data

- Essential data requirements include name, date/time of test, the result, a way to contact the person, and brand of RAT used
- If a test is invalid, a second test should be done.
- If tests are being done remotely (e.g., at home) a method needs to be put into place to supervise the test and verify results



Locations

- Testing stations should be established in a designated area/room before entering site
- They are best if they are outside or in an area that is easy to contain if there is a positive case
- Tests can be provided to trained workers to complete in their car or at home



Waste

- All test materials must be treated as hazardous waste
- PPE, swabs, cassettes and used tests should be put in ziploc bags or biohazard bins



Supervision / Coordination

- A person needs to be assigned oversight of the RAT testing for a site
- This person needs to be competent in the protocols, setup requirements and the testing method for the relevant test



Personal Protective Equipment

- Supervisors and others handling tests must wear a face mask and gloves



Training & Communications

- Workers must be consulted, informed of the benefits of RAT and the process
- Anyone getting a test must be given training or instruction on how to administer the test effectively (this can be via video or in person by the supervisor)



- You are NOT required to notify the health authority of RAT results
- Anyone who tests positive with RAT MUST self-isolate, get a PCR test, and follow guidance
- Use a trained coordinator to set up a testing station and oversee the testing program
- Individuals test themselves before entering the work area (allow 15 minutes for results)
- Remote (home or vehicle) testing is permitted as long as the person has been trained & the results supervised
- Anyone with symptoms must stay home and get a PCR test. RAT is not a diagnostic tool.