

Attention WCRA Members

Below is advice from NSW Health & DPIE relating to COVID-19 testing.

Please review this advice and distribute within your own organisations for the required actions,

Thanks & best regards,

Tony Khoury

Executive Director

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Subject: NSW COVID19 - Testing Approach & Times - 23 April 2020

Colleagues

For your information, I have sought advice from NSW Health regarding turnaround times for COVID19 testing.

The standard turn-around time for COVID-19 testing is now approximately 24 hours. Tests where the result is negative, advice of the test outcome is being provided by SMS. Where there is a positive result, notification occurs via the relevant health professional so follow-up steps and requirements can be detailed to the patient.

Due to this 24 hour timeframe for standard testing, NSW Health has indicated there is no ability for tests to be changed from standard to urgent once the initial test has been completed. Processing as an urgent test needs to be flagged at the time of testing.

The latest guidelines from NSW Health on expedited testing can be found at:

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/diseases/Pages/covid-19-testing-prioritisation.aspx>. As you will see, there is the ability to be identified as an essential worker at the time the test is taken, which will mark the sample for expedited testing.

NSW Health has advised there is no official list of types of essential workers for GP's or hospital staff etc to check against, however it is expected health staff would understand that the supply of services like waste, electricity, water and natural gas are essential.

With the current testing turnaround time being around 24hrs, expedited tests should only be considered for critical workers where a standard 24 hour turnaround time would have a significant impact to business operations.

Where a business does believe it has an internal need for expedited testing for key operational staff, such as those in control rooms, it is suggested the business develops appropriate internal procedures so the relevant staff can be advised that when a test is undertaken they will need to identify themselves as an essential worker and to demonstrate to the health professional on the ground that they require the urgent test.

In order to do this, the following actions have been suggested by NSW Health:

- Ensure the appropriate staff know that they must ask for the urgent test at the point of testing.
- If required, direct the health professional at the point of testing to the NSW Health website and the categories for urgent testing – Essential Services Worker being one of six groups - <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/diseases/Pages/covid-19-testing-prioritisation.aspx>
- Produce ID from the workplace as evidence.
- Present an official, pre-prepared letter from the company with their name and a short explanation of why an urgent test is required for this worker.

Should you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me.

Kind regards,

Steve Beaman PSM MAICD

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