



**Metropolitan
Transit
System**

Memorandum

DATE: January 31, 2022
TO: All Employees
FROM: Brendan Shannon, Director of Human Resources
SUBJECT: COVID-19 Testing Guidance and Resources

Earlier this month, the California Department of Public Health (“CDPH”) issued new COVID-19 quarantine/isolation guidance, which MTS implemented by revising the [COVID-19 Return to Work Guidance](#) policy on January 6, 2022. MTS’s revised policy allows employees who test positive to return to work after five (5) days if they take/pass a rapid COVID-19 test. Similarly, employees who are not vaccinated and boosted need to wait five (5) days and then take/pass a rapid COVID-19 test before returning to work if they have been in close contact with someone who tested positive.

This communication provides updated information on obtaining rapid and PCR COVID-19 tests, an update on PCR testing at MTS, and flowcharts that dictate the appropriate response following a positive test or close contact.

Rapid Antigen Tests

United States Postal Service – Free Tests

MTS suggests that all employees take advantage of the four (4) **free** test kits that are available to each household through the USPS. Use this link to order your free at-home rapid COVID-19 tests: <https://special.usps.com/testkits>

Drug Stores, Online Retailers and Retail Pharmacies

CVS, Walgreens and online retailers such as Amazon are often the easiest way to obtain rapid COVID-19 tests. The supply of rapid COVID-19 tests has been inconsistent in recent weeks, so it is recommended that employees keep sufficient kits available for themselves and their families.

Rapid Kits Available Through MTS

MTS provides an essential service to the community, and it is clear that the scarcity of rapid COVID-19 tests could impact our ability to operate. To prevent a potential loss of service, MTS has procured a limited quantity of rapid COVID-19 test kits for distribution to employees. Each operating department head has been given a supply of rapid COVID-19 test kits and employees can request kits from their department when they are unable to procure them through other means. Administrative employees may request kits from Joshua Sam Ramos, Human Resources Specialist, in the Human Resources Department. MTS rapid COVID-19 test kits are only for employee use, as we do not have sufficient supply to test members of your



family. As always, sick/exposed employees and employees who have tested positive are not allowed at work until they have been cleared to return by their department head or the Human Resources Department. It is important that we guard against COVID-19 transmission in the test-distribution process. When necessary, contact-free distribution can be arranged through the mail or parking lot pickup.

Over-the-counter COVID-19 Test Insurance Reimbursement

Based on changes in regulatory guidance, most health insurance will now reimburse participants for the cost of over-the counter tests they purchase. Most MTS employees receive healthcare through Kaiser Permanente or Blue Shield, so I am providing links to their claim forms below:

[Kaiser OTC Test Reimbursement](#)

[Blue Shield OTC Test Reimbursement](#)

PCR Testing

PCR tests are more sensitive and accurate than rapid COVID-19 tests. For this reason, MTS recommends that employees test regularly when at work, and verify positive rapid COVID-19 test results by taking a PCR test at a County site or through their healthcare provider.

Weekly On-site Test Raffle

So far, 36 employees have won \$50 bonuses by taking voluntary tests at work. Every employee who voluntarily takes a test at MTS through February will be entered to win one of four weekly \$50 bonuses.

On-Site PCR Testing Update

MTS continues to offer free on-site PCR testing through Color. High volumes have slowed the turnaround time for results to 70 hours, but we hope to see turnaround times revert to 24 hours in the coming weeks as the State's lab catches up. MTS Human Resources staff is now able to view and report on test results, but it is imperative that employees inform their supervisor immediately if they have a positive or "presumptive positive" COVID-19 test result.

Quarantine and Isolation Flowcharts

Ensuring that employees who are exposed to or test positive for COVID-19 follow the appropriate quarantine and isolation procedures is very important. Please refer to these flowcharts for assistance:

[Quarantine Following Close Contact](#)

[Isolation Following a Positive Test](#)

cc: All Agency Bulletin Boards
COVID-19 Web Pages
Text to All Employees