

Fact Sheet - Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) as a WHS risk control

RATs are an effective and 'high order' control and should be considered by all workplaces¹. They are effective at identifying people that have COVID-19 and are infectious. This allows workplaces to support and isolate positive workers away from the workplace and prevent workplace transmission.

Only rapid antigen tests that are approved by the TGA are permitted for use in Australia. A list of TGA-approved rapid antigen 'point of care' testing kits (for use under medical supervision) is available [here](#).

A list of kits approved for self-testing (for use without medical supervision) and instructions on how to use the kits is available [here](#). The TGA has also published a [fact sheet](#) on self-testing.

Implementing RATs in the workplace

The following principles should apply when introducing a RAT program:

- **If RATs are required to be performed at work then it must be paid time** – prior to starting work.
- **Whilst waiting for the test result [up to 20 minutes]**, interactions between people must be minimised eg separate space, maintain social distancing
- **If the RAT result not negative** – the person must not enter the workplace until a negative PCR test result is obtained
- **Paid leave** must be provided to all workers who need to get and wait for PCR test results [at a minimum 24 hours]
- **Paid Pandemic Leave must be available for all** workers to isolate whilst awaiting result and if positive for COVID
- **Everyone – irrespective of work role** – must be tested
- **Any private information must not be shared** with the employer/PCBU
- **The employer/PCBU should receive** only the results of the RAT.

Access to RATs will improve

Given the failure of the Commonwealth Government to source and supply RATs there is a limited access to some self-testing kits. At this time (Jan 2022) testing kits are being prioritised for some essential his may mean for some workplaces will have limited access to testing kits. **There are an estimated 300 million testing kits on order for Australia. When supply and access improves workplace should consider when this control should be implemented.**

Employers must pay for rapid testing programs

¹ RATs are a 'high order' control. This means that they are higher up the hierarchy of controls and should be considered in all workplaces where workers interact with others.

Your capacity to pay for a RAT program is not a relevant consideration under the model WHS Act, however you may consider the cost of the control measure after all other matters on the risks and controls have been considered. Given the risk of COVID-19 to Australian workplaces and workers, cost is unlikely to be determinative of whether you should implement a RAT program in your workplace should the supply issues have been resolved.

You must regularly review the controls that you have implemented to minimise COVID-19 risks. This means as supply and access of RATs improves workplaces must consider their implementation.