

**VDH Checklists for Indoor Community COVID-19 Testing Facilities:
Considerations for Local Health Departments and Healthcare Providers**

Updated October 8, 2020

Updates since September 17, 2020

- Updated checklists to include minimum considerations before and during indoor community testing events
- Added an optional engineering considerations checklist for organizers who have access to facilities management and/or other experts who could assist with engineering controls
- Included access and functional needs information

Introduction

Virginia Department of Health (VDH) maintains a list of COVID-19 testing sites and community testing events [here](#). As the weather cools for fall and winter, community testing efforts and collection sites might have to move indoors. COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from person to person. Spread occurs through respiratory droplets between people who are in close contact (within about 6 feet) with one another when a person who is infected coughs, sneezes, sings, or speaks and can be spread two days before they tested positive. Spread can also occur by people who are not showing [symptoms](#) and for the two days before symptomatic people become sick. Airborne transmission of SARS-CoV-2 can occur under special circumstances in enclosed spaces when there is prolonged exposure to respiratory particles and inadequate ventilation or air handling.

To reduce possible exposures to the virus during indoor testing events, attributes of the facility and the event should be considered to maximize safety for staff and participants. Facilities with access to the building engineer or facilities manager should also consider the need to change building operations regarding heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning (HVAC). In general, the disabling of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems is not a recommended measure to reduce the transmission of the virus. Viral (diagnostic) testing procedures such as nasopharyngeal (NP) and oropharyngeal (OP) swabbing are not considered aerosol-generating procedures (AGPs) and do not need to be done in an airborne infection isolation room (AIIR). However, collecting NP specimens can induce coughing or sneezing, which can spread COVID-19.

All indoor testing events should consider the minimum considerations outlined below for steps to take before holding an indoor testing event and steps to take during an indoor testing event. If facilities management or a building engineer is available, additional engineering considerations should be explored. Source control techniques can prevent or reduce the spread of infectious droplets and aerosols into the general air circulation by entrapping infectious droplets and aerosols as they are being emitted. General ventilation can be used for several purposes, including diluting and removing contaminated air, controlling airflow patterns within rooms, controlling the direction of airflow throughout a facility, and increasing the number of air changes per hour (ACH; minimum of 2 ACH). Considerations will vary depending on the setting.

Resources

1. ASHRAE. ASHRAE Position Document of Infectious Aerosols. www.ashrae.org/file%20library/about/position%20documents/pd_infectiousaerosols_2020.pdf
2. ASHRAE. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ). www.ashrae.org/technical-resources/frequently-asked-questions-faq
3. CDC. Performing Broad-Based Testing for SARS-CoV-2 in Congregate Settings. www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/broad-based-testing.html
4. CDC. Considerations for Events & Gatherings. www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/considerations-for-events-gatherings.html
5. EPA. Air Cleaners, HVAC Filters, and Coronavirus (COVID-19). www.epa.gov/coronavirus/air-cleaners-hvac-filters-and-coronavirus-covid-19
6. Minnesota Department of Health. Airborne Infectious Disease Management. www.health.state.mn.us/communities/ep/surge/infectious/airbornenegative.pdf

Additional Resources

1. VDH. COVID-19 Testing and Contact Tracing Health Equity Guidebook. https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/76/2020/09/Testing-and-Contact-Tracing-Health-Equity-Guidebook-July-2020_Copyright.pdf
2. VDEM. Guidance for the Inclusion of Individuals with Access and Functional Needs and Health Equity Considerations in COVID-19 Testing Sites Planning: A Checklist for State and Local Agencies. <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/76/2020/07/AFNHE-Testing-Site-Guidance-Checklist.pdf>

Checklist of Minimum Steps to Take before Holding Indoor Testing Events*

Checklist of Tasks	Yes	No	Comments
Select a large indoor space (e.g., gymnasiums) to ensure sufficient space is available to maintain a healthy environment and adequate social distancing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Select a space that allows for accessible (wheelchairs etc.) entry and exit through separate doors to assist with flow of the event.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ensure the selected location is ADA compliant with navigable pathways, appropriate surface grade/roughness, and wheelchair access.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Place visual cues, including tapes and signs, for areas people will form lines to ensure 6 feet of separation and movement in one direction.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Based on the size of the indoor space, determine how many testing stations are feasible while still allowing adequate space between stations. Provide areas with privacy screens for testing, if possible.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Designate separate spaces for each specimen collection testing station, either rooms with doors that close fully or protected spaces removed from other stations by distance and physical barriers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Place touchless hand-sanitizing stations between each station and at the facility's entrance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Create separate spaces for symptomatic and asymptomatic patients.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Provide accessible routes and options for persons who cannot stand for long periods or who have sensory issues (e.g., autism or brain injury). Attempt to decrease overall sounds (e.g., overhead paging systems).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Develop a plan for appropriately disposing of waste.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Develop a risk communication plan for addressing individuals' concerns about confidentiality, potential stigma or undesirable outcomes based on test results, and any distrust.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Review and revise operational plans to keep them consistent with the latest guidance to provide testing services as safely as possible.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Assess training needs and provide training to staff.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Provide adequate access to supplies and materials.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Communicate procedural changes to staff, volunteers, and attendees as appropriate and potentially using multiple means (e.g., printed materials and internet) and in a culturally appropriate and accessible manner.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Provide effective communication access to attendees (e.g., in-person or mobile interpretation services, step-by-step instructions). Consider language and other needs (large print, braille) of attendees.			
Consider having each person carry his or her prefilled specimen bag (a swab and labeled sterile viral transport media container) from the check-in area to the specimen collection area.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Consider having interview and temperature check stations (triage) outside the building to separate symptomatic and asymptomatic people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Pilot the processes and flow before the actual testing event.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

***Preparedness Task Subject Color Key**

*Preparedness Task Subject Color Key				
Facility/Structural Considerations	Process Considerations	Engineering Considerations	Staff/PPE Considerations	Attendee Considerations

Checklist of Minimum Steps to Routinely Take during Indoor Testing Events*

Checklist of Tasks	Yes	No	Comments
Ensure supplies and materials are well maintained and stocked in designated areas.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ensure staff, volunteers, and attendees have access and are wearing proper PPE and following outlined procedures for the event.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Communicate procedural changes to staff, volunteers, and attendees as appropriate and potentially using multiple means (e.g., printed materials and internet) and in a culturally appropriate and accessible manner.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Clean and disinfect all surfaces using an EPA-registered disinfectant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hourly for surfaces within 6 feet of where specimen collection is performed Anytime the surface is visibly soiled or within 6 feet of an uncovered cough/sneeze At the end of shift for all surface and equipment in the specimen collection area 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ensure distancing measures and physical barriers are being followed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ensure ADA compliance. Verify testing lanes, entrances, and other accessibility options maintain operational with no obstructions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Minimize the amount of time an individual spends in the testing area.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ensure the person being swabbed faces away from others so that if the person coughs or sneezes, the respiratory droplets will not be directed toward another person or a space where others will walk.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ensure individuals awaiting swabbing are not within 6 feet of where swabbing is being done or downstream from the area if the indoor space has directional airflow.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Test cohorted individuals (e.g., by residence or work group) together to limit their exposure to people in other groups.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Keep HVAC systems running longer hours (24/7 if possible).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
If opening windows and doors to increase airflow, consider safety and health issues to staff or attendees (e.g., risk of falling or triggering asthma symptoms).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

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Additional Engineering Considerations if the Facility/Building Manager is Involved with Event Planning

Checklist of Tasks	Yes	No	Comments
Assess capabilities of the facility HVAC system (e.g., source control, general ventilation, etc.) with facility or building managers to understand the capabilities of the facility.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Assess capacity of facility to utilize ASHRAE standards and capabilities of the heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning (HVAC) system (e.g., facility layout, air control abilities, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Consult with facility or building managers to ensure appropriate air-handling systems are installed and maintained in accordance with manufacturer’s instructions and comply with minimum ANSI/ASHRAE Standards 62.1 and 62.2.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Consult with experts to implement engineering controls beyond the minimum requirements.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Keep HVAC systems running longer hours (24/7 if possible).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Maintain normal operating temperature set points based on the existing licensing requirements for the space use and occupancy. Consider maintaining relative humidity (RH) between 40-60% RH.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Increase the number of air changes per hour (ACH) to decrease the risk of transmission in closed spaces.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Maintain a minimum of 2 ACH and 2 ACH total air, though higher total air is desired.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ensure air flows from less contaminated to more contaminated areas, if possible, in one direction. If portable ventilation equipment like fans will be used, take steps to minimize air from them blowing from one person directly at another person to reduce the potential spread of any airborne or aerosolized viruses.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Direct the airflow any air cleaners used so that it does not blow directly from person to person.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Test the efficiency of the building HVAC and filtration system prior to the event.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

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