



# Clinician alert #34 – All clinicians

Effective from 28 October 2020

## SARS-CoV-2 Rapid Antigen Testing

The Public Health Laboratory network (PHLN) and Communicable Diseases Network Australia (CDNA) have released a joint statement on SARS-CoV-2 rapid antigen tests which can be found [here](#).

- PHLN and CDNA note that rapid antigen tests may have a role as a screening test for COVID-19 in certain contexts and settings, to be determined by jurisdictional public health authorities. This will be complementary to, and not a replacement for, Reverse Transcriptase Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR) testing;
- PHLN and CDNA caution against the wide-scale implementation of any type of new testing technology before appropriate post-market evaluation is undertaken. PHLN and CDNA note there are many issues to consider, including supply chains, logistics, cost, ease-of-use, test performance, data security and privacy;
- PHLN and CDNA recommend only a medical practitioner or suitably qualified person should perform or supervise the use of rapid antigen tests; and
- PHLN and CDNA urge the continued and rigorous evaluation of emerging testing technologies prior to use. This helps safeguard Australia's world-leading testing capacity for COVID-19 and ensures that the highest quality testing technology is available to support the Australian community.
- In Western Australia (WA) the Chief Health Officer has **prohibited** the use of SARS-CoV-2 rapid antigen tests as an acute illness diagnostic tool for COVID-19, as their use may adversely affect the prevention, control and abatement of the serious public health risk presented by COVID-19.

The Chief Health Officer letter on *Prohibition on the Use of Rapid Antigen Tests Directions* can be found [here](#).

## Maritime crew members

The requirements of Maritime crew members have changed in accordance with the *Quarantine (Closing the Border) Approval for Maritime Crew (No 4)* which can be found [here](#).

- Crew members flying into WA to embark a vessel, must quarantine at a quarantine centre for 14 days prior to embarkation, unless they have completed supervised quarantine in another state or territory in Australia.
- A maritime crew member can only disembark from an affected vessel:
  - at a Perth Port; or
  - at a port other than a Perth Port if, as soon as possible (within 8 hours) after they disembark the vessel they board a charter flight to Perth airport.
  - at any port to undertake port activities;
  - at any port to transfer to another vessel in the port;
- When the crew member disembarks an affected vessel or charter flight in Perth they must:
  - if the flight out of Australia leaves within 8 hours of disembarking the affected vessel in Perth or the arrival of the charter flight, travel directly to Perth airport for their flight out of Australia; or

- if the flight out of Australia does not leave within 8 hours of disembarking the affected vessel in Perth or the arrival of the charter flight, travel directly to a relevant place, which may include a quarantine centre or an approved crew hotel, and remain there while they wait for their flight out of Australia.
- A crew member who is ordinarily resident in Australia may, in addition to the above, disembark a vessel in a Perth Port and go directly to a quarantine centre for 14 days. Or, if they disembark in a port other than a Perth Port, as soon as possible after they disembark the vessel, board a charter flight to an airport in the Perth metropolitan region and then go directly to a quarantine centre where they will undergo 14 days' quarantine.
- A Crew Member disembarking at a port that is not a Perth Port, and leaving Perth on a flight within 8 hrs (arriving by vessel), can take a private chartered vehicle to a nearby regional airport and must take a private chartered flight to Perth, to meet a flight leaving Australia
- A Crew Member disembarking at a port that is not a Perth Port, and leaving Perth on a flight more than 8 hours later (arriving by vessel), can take a private chartered vehicle to a regional airport, must take a private chartered flight to Perth, will be transported directly to a Quarantine Centre, and can leave the Quarantine Centre to meet a flight leaving Australia
- Any crew member who disembarks in a port other than Perth will not be allowed to board a commercial flight. To disembark, a non-Australian resident must have a ticket or other confirmed booking for a flight to a destination outside of Australia.
- At all times crew members will be required to practise hand hygiene, cough etiquette and physical distancing and wear a face mask.

### **COVID-19 testing information**

Refer to ['Testing for SARS-CoV-2 in Western Australia #15'](#) for further information regarding testing criteria in WA.

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**PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTRE – STRATEGY**