

OREGON STATE PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION

Office of the State Public Health Director

Kate Brown, Governor



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RE: Employee Screening for COVID-19

We have received increasing reports of employers asking employees without symptoms to undergo testing for COVID-19 as a condition of employment. While not prohibited, the Oregon Health Authority does not generally recommend requiring employees without symptoms for COVID-19 to be tested. Testing of individuals with no COVID-19 like symptoms is *very unlikely* to detect cases of COVID-19 and does not provide any guarantee that COVID-19 will not enter the workplace.

The actions below are a better way to protect your workplace from COVID-19 infection:

- Screen employees for symptoms of COVID-19 at the beginning of each shift (e.g., asking if an employee has had cough, fever, shortness of breath, or is otherwise feeling unwell). If an employee has any COVID-19 like symptoms or does not feel well, they should be asked to go home.
- Encourage employees to stay home when ill and provide sick leave
- Require employees to wear masks, face shields or face coverings consistent with [OHA guidance](#)
- Ensure that employees maintain 6 feet of physical distance from others
- Encourage frequent handwashing
- Disinfect the workplace frequently

Requiring employees without symptoms for COVID-19 to be tested places an unnecessary burden on employees and uses valuable testing resources. If you do require testing as a condition of employment, you must pay for that expense. You should review the [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's guidance](#).

We thank you for your collaboration. Guidance for employers may be viewed [here](#).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dean E. Sidelinger".

Dean E. Sidelinger, MD MEd  
Health Officer and State Epidemiologist  
Oregon Health Authority

<http://healthoregon.org/coronavirus>