

COVID-19 Testing in Industrial Camps: Guidance for Online Clinic providers

Across the Northern Health (NH) region, there are many remote industrial work camps without access to medical providers on-site. COVID-19 outbreaks in industrial camps have the potential to affect large numbers of people, overwhelm local health services, require multiple evacuations for hospitalization, and contribute to spread in other nearby communities. Prompt testing of anyone with symptoms is important in order to identify the need for enhanced infection control measures, and to plan early for possible evacuations in the event of serious illness.

Summary

When a symptomatic person calls from a work camp and needs testing, ask:

- 1. Do they need evacuation to a higher level of care?**
- 2. Can they easily and safely travel to and from a specimen collection centre, while remaining in isolation?**

If the answer to both questions is 'no', testing should occur in camp. Work with the nearest [NH laboratory](#) and the camp operator to ensure:

- 3. Appropriate specimen collection**
- 4. Completion and delivery of requisitions**
- 5. Transportation of testing supplies**

1. Evacuation to a higher level of care

If the patient requires acute care or other urgent care not available in the camp, they should be evacuated. All remote industrial camps in BC are required to have access to urgent transportation for serious illness or injury.

2. Safe travel to and from a specimen collection centre

If the camp has easy road access to an NH specimen collection centre, and the patient can drive there alone, without stopping anywhere else in the community, or can otherwise travel safely while remaining in strict isolation, they can be tested the same way as anybody else in the community.

Otherwise, the patient should remain in camp and be tested in place, so they can remain in isolation.

3. Determine who will collect the specimen(s)

Nasopharyngeal swabs can be collected by anyone who has received specific training to do so. The camp may have a nurse, paramedic, or first aid attendant with this training.

Does the camp have any staff on site who are trained and competent to collect a nasopharyngeal swab?

<p>Yes, camp staff can collect a nasopharyngeal swab</p>	<p>No, the patient must self-collect the specimens <i>(available as a pilot program only for remote settings with no provider)</i></p>
<p>Direct the trained camp staff to collect the nasopharyngeal swab, in accordance with current NH specimen collection guidance (OurNH link).</p>	<p>Follow interim BCCDC guidance for self-collected specimens for COVID-19 diagnosis. This involves three specimens:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a nasal swab (both nares), • a throat swab, and • a saline gargle. <p>Information for providers on counselling the patient is available here. There is also a special laboratory requisition for this test.</p> <p>If there are any concerns about the patient's ability to adhere to the instructions, ask that a person responsible for health and safety in the camp observe the collection process. You may also offer to observe via a virtual health visit.</p>

4. Send testing supplies, if needed

Does the camp already have testing supplies available on site? If not, the camp operator will have to pick them up from an [NH laboratory services location](#). The camp operator should call the lab to arrange the pick-up.

Staff-collected nasopharyngeal swab	Self-collected specimens
<p>Necessary supplies include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Viral swabs • Biohazard bags • A requisition and labels • TDG Category B-compliant packaging • A cool gel pack/ice pack (preferred, not mandatory) • PPE for the staff doing the collection 	<p>Complete self-collection kits are stocked at certain NH laboratory locations. These include blank requisitions and labels, as well as specimen collection instructions.</p>

If the camp has more than 50 people and has infrequent access to transportation (twice a week or less), send enough supplies to test six people, in order to reduce delays in testing future cases.

5. Send completed requisitions and labels

Completed laboratory requisitions and labels must accompany the collected specimens. Use the [standard laboratory requisition](#) for provider-collected samples. There is a special requisition for self-collected samples ([BCCDC guidance, Appendix B](#)).

Requisitions and labels must include the ordering provider's information, the patient's information including PHN, as well as the testing code **TRE** for tree-planting camps, or **CGT** for all other types of work camps.

Options for transmitting requisitions and labels include:

- Send completed requisitions and labels to the camp along with the testing supplies.
- Transmit the completed documents electronically for printing at the camp. The patient's consent is required if transmission cannot be done in a secure and confidential manner.
- If the camp has a stock of blank requisitions and labels, instruct the patient on filling them out manually. The self-collection kits contain blank requisitions and labels.

6. Camp operator arranges specimen collection and returns specimens to NH

As discussed above, either the trained camp staff collects a nasopharyngeal specimen, or the symptomatic person self-collects three specimens under observation.

The camp operator then transports the collected specimens, as soon as possible, back to the [NH laboratory service location](#) for processing. Specimens should be:

- Appropriately labelled
- Placed in biohazard bags
- Accompanied by the completed requisition
- Kept at refrigerator temperature (2-8°C), in a cooler with a gel pack or ice pack, if possible
 - Ambient temperature is acceptable if this is not feasible or would introduce delays
- Packaged and transported in accordance with TDG Category B requirements

Key resources

- [Northern Health guidance for camp operators on COVID-19 testing in industrial camps](#)
- [BCCDC COVID-19 testing guidelines](#)
- [Northern Health COVID-19 sample collection guidance](#) (OurNH link)
- Resources for self-collected specimens:
 - [Interim clinical guidance](#)
 - [Information for providers](#)
 - [Patient instructions](#)
 - [Laboratory requisition](#)