



CIVILIAN SURVEILLANCE TESTING FAQ

a/o January 2021

Q: WHAT IS THIS EFFORT? WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

A: The goal of surveillance testing is to test people without symptoms for COVID-19 to determine if additional public health actions are needed. Participation in surveillance testing will help leaders at the local installation identify work areas where COVID-19 may be present and take protective actions.

This expansion of existing surveillance testing at AFMC installations includes civilian employee populations at the following locations: Edwards Air Force Base, Calif.; Eglin AFB, Fla.; Hanscom AFB, Mass.; and Hill AFB, Utah. Civilian personnel selected for test participation will be picked at random, and participation is voluntary.

This expansion of testing at AFMC installations supplements [previous testing](#) which began in October 2020 at four AFMC bases among select active-duty populations.

Q: WHAT CIVILIAN POPULATIONS ARE BEING CONTACTED TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS TESTING?

A: Select civilian populations are based on Air Force guidance of up to 10 percent of medical personnel and locally designated higher risk/key positions, and no less than 1 percent of the remaining installation workforce tested every 14 days.

As testing efforts are fine-tuned and streamlined, testing will expand among other base populations.

Q: HOW WILL I BE NOTIFIED OF SELECTION TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS TEST EFFORT?

A: Local installation civilian personnel offices will work in conjunction with the local Military Treatment Facilities (MTFs) to decide best practices for each location's selection of employees, and subsequent notification of those employees.

Q: IS CIVILIAN PARTICIPATION IN SURVEILLANCE TESTING MANDATORY?

A: Participation in this testing effort is voluntary, and you may decline to take part.

Q: HOW DO I DECLINE PARTICIPATION?

A: A non-response or declination to any selection communication received will constitute your declining to take part in this surveillance testing effort.

Q: I WOULD LIKE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS TESTING EFFORT. WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

A: Follow the instructions in the email message you receive requesting your participation.

Q: AS A CIVILIAN EMPLOYEE WHO CHOOSES TO PARTICIPATE VOLUNTARILY, WHAT ARE MY OPTIONS FOR WHERE I CAN GET TESTED? ON BASE OR OFF BASE?

A: At this time, MTFs at the designated installations are able administer this COVID-19 test to Department of Defense civilian personnel and select contractors, even if they normally cannot receive care through the MTF. Since this is a DoD effort, the MTF must take the sample. There is no off-base option for this process.

Q: I AM A CIVILIAN EMPLOYEE WHO DOES NOT TYPICALLY RECEIVE MY HEALTHCARE AT A MILITARY TREATMENT FACILITY AT THE BASE. AM I ALLOWED TO OBTAIN THIS TEST AT AN MTF NOW?

A: Yes, if you are participating in the surveillance testing. Additional information about your testing options for other purposes can be obtained by contacting your local MTF.

Q: I AM VOLUNTARILY PARTICIPATING IN THIS TESTING, BUT WOULD PREFER TO SEE MY PROVIDER WHO IS NOT PART OF AN ON-BASE MTF. WHAT ARE MY OPTIONS, AND WHO PAYS FOR THIS TEST?

A: Since this is a DoD surveillance effort, the MTF must take the sample. There is no off-base option for this process.

Q: I RECENTLY TESTED POSITIVE FOR COVID-19. SHOULD I PARTICIPATE IN THIS TESTING EFFORT?

A: No. If you have had a confirmed positive COVID-19 test within the last 90 days, please do not participate.

Q: IF I AM SELECTED AND PARTICIPATE VOLUNTARILY, WILL I BE REQUIRED TO TAKE LEAVE FOR THE TIME USED TO TAKE A COVID TEST?

A: The civilian employee is in regular duty status, and is not required to use leave for the time period required to get the Curative test.

Q: HOW WILL THE SURVEILLANCE TEST ITSELF BE ADMINISTERED?

A: The test administered at MTFs uses oral fluids (saliva) collected from an individual's mouth with a cotton swab under the supervision of the medical team. Samples from four to six individuals will be grouped together and an identifier assigned to the grouped sample. This is called aggregated testing. The aggregated sample will be tested for the presence of the COVID-19 virus.

Installation Public Health will internally track which individuals were part of that sample. This is a surveillance test for the presence of COVID-19 in populations of people and not a clinical test for the presence of COVID-19 in individuals. Due to the rules for using this test to identify COVID-19 activity in populations of people without symptoms, tests will not be ordered through the MTF's medical system and results will not be placed in health records.

The test is called the Curative SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) Assay and processed by KorvaLabs Inc., as part of a central contract with the Department of the Air Force to conduct COVID-19 testing. More information about the test can be found [here](#).

Q: HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE FOR PUBLIC HEALTH TO RECEIVE THE AGGREGATED RESULTS?

A: Thirty-six to 48 hours on average, although this can vary due to a variety of factors.

Q: HOW ARE TEST RESULTS REPORTED?

A: KorvaLabs will send aggregated sample test results to the MTF. Public Health will review the results. No results will be entered into your medical record because this test and method is not approved for determining whether or not a person without symptoms has the COVID-19 virus. When used for testing people with no symptoms, we can only use it to test an aggregated sample for the possible presence of the COVID-19 virus.

If the aggregated sample test is negative, individuals in that aggregated sample will NOT be notified and no result will be entered into your record. Do not contact the MTF to ask about aggregated testing results because they cannot provide that to you.

If there is a positive result in your aggregated testing group, your unit leadership will be notified and they will notify you to seek additional medical evaluation within the next duty day. Until the medical evaluation is accomplished, you should follow strict public health measures -- maintaining six feet of distance from others, wearing a cloth face mask, frequently washing hands, and avoiding large gatherings. It is recommended that if you are unable to get medically evaluated (if part of the positive aggregate group) that you self-isolate for 10 days from the date your test was collected, assuming you remain asymptomatic. If any personnel are mission essential, they should follow the DoD Force Health Protection Guidance for working while under quarantine, found in [Supplement 8](#).

Whether or not you are notified that you should get further evaluation, all personnel should continue practicing public health precautions as directed by your base leadership, including wearing cloth face masks, the washing of hands, keeping at least six feet away from others and avoiding large gatherings.

Public Health also reports aggregated test results to the Air Force COVID Lab Team for submission to the DoD COVID Task Force. No individual lab results are reported based on surveillance testing.

Q: IF MY AGGREGATED SAMPLE GROUP IS POSITIVE AND I SEE MY PROVIDER, WHAT WILL THEY DO?

A: You and your medical provider will determine the scope of this evaluation, which could include additional individual testing for the COVID-19 virus.

Q: IF I AM PART OF AN AGGREGATE GROUP WITH A POSITIVE RESULT, WHAT KIND OF LEAVE IS USED FOR THIS PERIOD OF TIME?

A: If an aggregate group tests positive, asymptomatic employees in the pool will telework if eligible, or will be placed on Weather and Safety Leave if telework is not an option, until the employee tests negative on a follow-up diagnostic test or has remained asymptomatic during 10 consecutive days of self-isolation.

If an employee becomes symptomatic, the employee will be placed on sick leave for any period of time the employee is not eligible and able to effectively telework.

Q: CAN I BE SELECTED MORE THAN ONCE FOR PARTICIPATION IN THIS TESTING EFFORT?

A: Local civilian personnel offices, in conjunction with local Military Treatment Facilities, will use a method to randomly select individuals in targeted testing populations. It is possible to be selected more than once.

Q: I HAVE MORE QUESTIONS. WHO DO I CONTACT?

A: For further questions and more information, please contact your local base civilian personnel office and/or Military Treatment Facility.