

Memorandum



Metropolitan Transportation Authority

State of New York

DATE: April 28, 2020

TO: Agency Presidents

FROM: Patrick T. Warren, Chief Safety Officer

RE: BioReference Antibody Program – Testing Protocol

Governor Cuomo has prioritized expanded COVID-19 antibody testing throughout New York State, starting with health care workers, public transit employees, and other first responders and essential employees. To advance this effort, the State has partnered with BioReference Laboratories (“BioReference”) to administer COVID-19 antibody testing. Beginning April 29, 2020, MTA employees will have the opportunity to participate in the BioReference Antibody Program. Priority will be given to personnel designated as essential, performing critical operational roles.

Participation in the testing program is **voluntary**, and the tests will be provided at **no cost** to MTA employees. The BioReference Antibody Program is an opportunity for essential MTA employees to receive streamlined, priority access for antibody tests that are not yet widely available. These tests will provide employees with the latest available information on their health status as it pertains to COVID-19 exposure. Please see the attached handout from the NYS Department of Health concerning antibody testing. As the New York State Department of Health attachment states, whether a person is immune won’t be known until persons with antibodies are exposed again to SARS-CoV-2 and studies can be done on whether any of them are infected again. It is also not known how long the antibodies will last.

Additional antibody testing also allows New York State to better estimate the overall infection rate, which in turn helps inform public health recommendations and the reopening strategy for New York.

This document outlines the process for MTA employees to request and receive antibody testing through the BioReference Antibody Program. Individuals currently exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms (e.g. temperature above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, dry cough, shortness of breath) cannot receive testing. If an employee previously contracted COVID-19, three full weeks (21 days) must have elapsed since the onset of their symptoms to be eligible for testing. All other asymptomatic employees who have not been diagnosed with COVID-19 are eligible for testing.

The volume of antibody testing completed through the BioReference Antibody Program is dependent upon employee demand and available supply of antibody tests. The process is outlined below. Further information on schedule and testing locations will be issued in the coming days.

1. Employees will register online (bioreferencelabs.secure.force.com/MTA/) for antibody testing and select an available time slot that supports your operations at one of the identified testing locations. The attached information paper from BioReference further explains how to access registration for testing.
2. Employees will report to the testing site at their appointed time to complete necessary intake forms and have their blood drawn by BioReference medical staff. During this intake process, non-disclosure procedures will be explained to employees.
3. Employees will be able to access their test results online within 24-48 hours.

Regardless of test results, employees should continue to follow all COVID-19 health guidance and precautions including proper PPE use, good hygiene, and social distancing.