



# FAQs – BODY TEMPERATURE TESTING

**One of the common symptoms of COVID19 is a fever. For this reason, some businesses have chosen to test the body temperature of workers or visitors prior to starting work or visiting the workplace.**

**There is no legislative obligation or rule that requires you to do body temperature testing, however if your business chooses to undertake temperature testing the following FAQs may assist you.**

## WHAT IS A NORMAL BODY TEMPERATURE RANGE?

The normal body temperature of someone is 36.4-37.5 degrees Celsius.

## WHAT IS A “HIGH” TEMPERATURE?

Any temperature reading over 37.5 degrees Celsius is considered to be a “high” temperature or fever. It is important to remember that some people regularly run higher than average temperatures for reasons that may not be related to an illness.

## TYPES OF THERMOMETERS

There are many different types of thermometers on the market. Some are designed for testing temperature of liquids, surfaces and wall cavities, and others are specifically designed for testing human temperature.

A thermometer designed for testing humans will usually have a measurement range between 34 to 43 degrees Celsius, and a 0.1 to 0.2 degree accuracy. Whereas those designed for surfaces and liquids have a measurement range of -20 to 200 degrees Celsius and often a 2 to 3% variance in accuracy.

There are 4 main types of thermometers for human temperature testing:

- Sublingual/Axilla - Under the tongue/armpit
- Tympanic - Ear canal
- Infra-red forehead- Forehead (non-contact)
- Rectal probe - Probe in rectum

## WHICH TYPES OF THERMOMETER WOULD BE BEST FOR WORKPLACE TESTING?

The two most practical thermometers for workplace testing are:

### 1. Infra-red forehead scanner

This is the best option for testing a worker on a building site. It is a handheld device that is held approx. 20-30cm from a person’s forehead to gain a temperature reading. It does not require any consumables as the thermometer itself does not touch the person, however it is recommended that the person doing the scanning wears a mask as they will be close to the person being scanned. These thermometers are easy to use.

The leading brands in this type are Welch Allyn and Braun, and range from \$75 to \$600

### 2. Tympanic thermometer

This thermometer takes an infra-red reading from the tympanic membrane inside the ear canal. This is the model commonly used at a doctor surgery or hospital.

Tympanic thermometers require a plastic protective cover that needs to be changed after every use. This will be an ongoing outlay for the users. There is also a need for the operator to have regular change of appropriate protective equipment (mask and gloves) as they may need to touch the person they are testing.

The person doing the testing requires some knowledge of getting the thermometer in the ear canal correctly and get an accurate reading, but overall they are quite easy to use.

The leading brands in this type are Welch Allyn and Braun, and range from \$75 to 400.

## WHEN SHOULD TEMPERATURE TESTS BE CONDUCTED?

When people should be tested is a decision of your business. However it is recommended that workers and visitors to be tested on entry to the workplace. Also, tests may be repeated throughout a shift.

## WHO SHOULD BE TESTED?

It is recommended that all visitors and workers at a workplace are tested.

## WHAT IF A WORKER FAILS THE TEMPERATURE TEST?

If a person has a high temperature reading, it does not necessarily mean the employee has COVID 19. The person may be experiencing some other health condition.

A worker who has a high temperature reading is not to enter the workplace and should be instructed by their employer or relevant supervisor to return home, comply with social distancing, and make immediate arrangements for a COVID-19 test or appropriate medical assessment by a doctor.

The workplace should have up to date information available for testing locations or medical clinics.

The worker should not return to work until they have received a medical clearance and/ or negative test result.

## WHO WILL BE ELIGIBLE FOR A COVID-19 TEST?

A person is eligible for testing if they have a fever (or history of fever) or acute respiratory symptoms, and, in the last 14 days:

- they were a close contact or a household contact of a confirmed case
- they had been overseas, including on a cruise ship.

Testing is also possible for people who have a fever (or history of fever) or acute respiratory symptoms, AND:

- work in vulnerable settings such as healthcare, aged or residential care, military, correction facilities, detention centres and boarding schools.
- live in:
  - Brisbane (residents within the Metro North and Metro South Hospital and Health Services boundaries)
  - Gold Coast or
  - Cairns (the area bounded by and including Palm Cove to the north, Mareeba to the west, and Gordonvale to the south)
- live in an area where an outbreak has occurred
- live in a First Nations community.

If the person is unwell and hasn't been overseas or in contact with a confirmed case they may not be tested. A doctor will make this assessment based on symptoms.

## WHO COVERS THE COSTS OF AN ASSESSMENT/ TESTING?

Any costs associated with testing/assessment are to be paid by the workers employer. Sole traders will be responsible for their own tests and costs.

## WILL THE PERSON STILL BE PAID?

Whilst the worker is arranging and receiving the available medical assessment the worker will not lose wages for ordinary hours they would have worked had they attended work.

If the worker tests negative OR is assessed by a medical practitioner as fit for work, the employee must commence work on the working day immediately following the day of testing or assessment.

If the test is positive OR is assessed by a medical practitioner as unfit for work, the employee will be required to quarantine themselves for at least 14 days.

Unless otherwise agreed by the employer, wages are not paid during a period of quarantine. Paid Personal leave is available subject to balance. Unpaid personal leave will continue until the worker is able to return to work.