

For Immediate Release:
March 28, 2020

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COVID-19 Testing Available for First Responders and Health Care Workers

To qualify, public health and safety professionals must meet state laboratory criteria
JEFFERSON CITY – First responders on the front lines are working hard to protect Missourians during the COVID-19 pandemic. In an effort to both keep them healthy and keep them on the job, the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services is expediting COVID-19 testing and test results for some first responders and other public health and safety professionals by processing their specimens through the Missouri State Public Health Laboratory.

The Missouri State Public Health Laboratory includes the testing of Missourians working in health care and public safety who have had close contact with suspected COVID-19 patients *and* subsequently experience symptoms such as fever, cough or shortness of breath. The lab can provide test results within 24 hours of receiving the specimen — a faster rate than the 8-9 days of some commercial laboratories. This means front-line professionals who test negative and recover from symptoms may return to work sooner and continue providing critical services to fellow Missourians.

Testing is *not* available for people who are asymptomatic. **For testing at the state laboratory, first responders must meet two criteria:**

- Close contact with a suspected COVID-19 patient
- Symptoms such as fever, cough or shortness of breath

First responders who meet these criteria can ask their health care providers to call the COVID-19 24-hour hotline at **877-435-8411** to request testing. If the patient is approved for testing, the hotline representatives will assist with the completion of a PUI (person under investigation) form and send a copy to the Missouri State Public Health Laboratory.

For more information, please see the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services health update: <https://health.mo.gov/emergencies/ert/alertsadvisories/pdf/update32320.pdf>

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[Past Missouri COVID-19 news releases](#)

About the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services: The department seeks to be the leader in protecting health and keeping people safe. More information about DHSS can be found at <http://health.mo.gov> or find us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) @HealthyLivingMo