News Release
March 6, 2021

Contact information

State announces new COVID-19 testing site in Thief River Falls

Pop-up site will offer saliva testing to everyone

Today the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) announced a new temporary COVID-19 testing site at the Thief River Falls Armory. Testing at this site will occur Tuesday, March 9 through Thursday, March 11 from noon-6 p.m. Appointments are strongly encouraged but not required.

"Testing is a key component of our strategy to protect Minnesotans from COVID-19," said Minnesota Commissioner of Health Jan Malcolm. "Through a robust, collaborative statewide testing program, we have made great progress in removing obstacles to testing. When combined with social distancing, masking, avoiding crowds and staying home when sick, testing can help us slow the spread of COVID-19 while we work tirelessly to get as many Minnesotans as we can vaccinated."

"Our COVID-19 testing strategy has been data-driven since day one with the goal of offering low-barrier testing for every Minnesotan who needs it," said Dan Huff, MDH assistant commissioner for health protection. "The sooner we identify positive cases, the sooner infected individuals can take steps to isolate and stop the spread of the virus. We are increasingly concerned about dramatic increases in cases particularly in Pennington County which is the highest case rate in the state, more than 5 times the statewide average and 6 times that of Hennepin County. Right now Thief River Falls is the center of this COVID-19 hotspot, which is spreading to neighboring counties. It is essential people in these areas of greater Minnesota have access to easy and no-cost testing."

The Thief River Falls site is a coordinated effort between the State of Minnesota, the Minnesota National Guard, Inter-County Nursing Service, Thief River Falls Armory and Vault Health.

"The spread in our community is affecting all areas of our lives, and we need to get a handle on this situation and slow the spread down," said Kayla Jore, director of Inter-County Nursing Service. "Testing is a way that we can identify spread and disease to help stifle it."

As with all the state's community testing sites, testing at the Thief River Falls site is offered at no cost. Participants will be asked for their health insurance information so the state can bill their insurance company on their behalf. If a person is uninsured or if insurance doesn't cover some or all of the cost, the state will cover the difference so testing remains open to all at no cost.

Testing is open to anyone who believes they need a COVID-19 test, with or without insurance. State guidance on who should get tested was recently updated and can be found on the Minnesota COVID-19 Response webpage, Who Should Get Tested?.

Those who arrive for a test should avoid eating, drinking, chewing, or smoking anything for at least 30 minutes before providing a sample. Once they arrive at the site, they will self-administer the test by salivating into a funnel attached to a small tube. Clinic staff will be available on-site to monitor the collection process.

Walk-ins are welcome. People seeking testing at the Thief River Falls site can schedule a test online through Vault Health. Tests will be processed in Minnesota at the saliva lab in Oakdale run by Vault Health and Infinity Biologix (IBX). Results will be provided via email in approximately 48-72 hours.

Testing site location:
Thief River Falls Armory
250 Emil St.
Thief River Falls, MN 56701

Hours of operation:
Tuesday, March 9 – Thursday, March 11
Noon to 6 p.m.

-MDH-

Minnesota Helpline:

For questions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, call 651-297-1304 or 1-800-657-3504.

Mental Health Crisis Line - Call: **CRISIS (**274747)

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