

Oral fluid workplace drug testing: What the new Department of Transportation oral fluid drug testing final rule means for you

The Department of Transportation (DOT) has published its final rule permitting oral fluid (saliva) drug testing for DOT-regulated employers. This is the first time the DOT is supporting an alternative to urine testing. Let's review the highlights of this final rule.

What does the DOT say about oral fluid testing?

Historically, only urine testing was allowed under the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)/Department of Transportation (DOT) guidelines. Laboratory-based oral fluid drug testing will become a viable option for DOT-regulated employees, once at least two laboratories become Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) certified for oral fluid testing. This means DOT employers will soon be able to take advantage of the many benefits laboratory-based oral fluid drug testing has provided to non-regulated employers for nearly 20 years.

It is important to note that the final rule states, **should an employee identify as non-binary or transgender and they require a direct observed collection, they must use an oral fluid drug test.**

Why is this change so significant?

With the opioid epidemic plaguing many cities and towns — along with the legalization of marijuana in some states — reliable workplace drug testing is more essential than ever.

The inclusion of oral fluid drug testing for DOT presents employers with the ability to conveniently perform collections while maintaining the accuracy of a laboratory-based test. Additionally, oral fluid offers many benefits, including increased positivity rates due to its ability to naturally thwart cheat attempts. According to the 2019 Quest Index,¹ overall positivity rates in the general workforce are 10.2% for oral fluid, compared to 5.1% for urine.



“Oral fluid testing offers a completely appropriate solution for all of these scenarios because every oral fluid collection is a directly observed collection”

U.S. Department of Transportation



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The benefits of oral fluid testing vs. urine testing

The key advantages of oral fluid drug testing include:

- **Better recent-use detection** – deal with on-the-job risks and concerns related to marijuana more effectively.
- **Easy to administer** – collect samples anytime, anywhere — reducing costs.
- **Faster processing** – improve productivity with less time away from work than with urine collection.
- **Virtually tamper-proof and cannot be diluted** – reduce risk of missing positives, increasing safety in the workplace.
- **Accurate and legally defensible** – have confidence in your results.
- **Eliminates privacy and gender issues** – improves attitudes about testing and streamlines collection.

What are your choices now?

If you are a non-regulated employer, or have a portion of non-regulated employees, there is nothing to wait for — you can start using oral fluid now! Simply consult with your provider on how to make laboratory-based oral fluid drug testing part of your policy/program. If your provider or laboratory does not currently offer oral fluid testing as a service, just let us know and we can help you.

If you are a DOT-regulated employer, it is important to learn about these changes, what the certification process for labs will be and to understand when to use urine and/or oral fluid testing.

OraSure can help with these steps and answer any questions you may have about oral fluid testing.

To learn more, contact us at:
1-800-672-7873 or
testingsolutions@orasure.com



About OraSure

OraSure Technologies is a leader in the development, manufacture and distribution of oral fluid diagnostics and collection devices, and other technologies designed to detect and/or diagnose critical medical conditions.



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¹ Quest Diagnostics™, Drug Testing Index™. (2019). A comprehensive analysis of workplace drug use trends. <https://www.questdiagnostics.com/content/dam/corporate/restricted/documents/employer-solutions/Drug-Testing-Index-2019---web.pdf>
<https://www.transportation.gov/odapc/frpubs> U.S. Department of Transportation
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