**RAPID ANTIGEN TESTING – FACT SHEET**

There are two commonly used COVID-19 tests:

* Polymerase Chain Reaction (**PCR**);
* Rapid Antigen Tests (**RAT**s).

**PCR** tests detect the presence of COVID-19 including during the early stages of an infection (before a person begins to feel unwell) and during the later stages (when a person is no longer symptomatic or even infectious). PCR tests do not differentiate between a person’s infectious stage and when a person’s infectious stage is over.

**RAT**s detect the presence of viral antigens in the body. People create COVID-19 viral antigens only during their infectious stage. COVID-19 antigens are what is transmitted from one person to another when they infect each other with the virus. RATs therefore test whether someone is infectious with COVID-19 (even if they are feeling well).

**Why is the County Court using RATs to screen for entry to the court building?**

The County Court is using RATs to identify and exclude people who are COVID-19 infectious.

If you test positive on a RAT, you are infectious and may transmit COVID-19 to the people around you.

If you test negative on a RAT, you are unlikely to transmit COVID-19 to other people.

In combination with other measures, RATs help the Court to maintain a COVID-safe environment.

**I recently had COVID-19, but I have now finished my mandated quarantine period – can I still be refused entry due to a positive RAT test?**

Yes. Even if you have completed your quarantine period, if you test positive on a RAT, you are still infectious. If you are still infectious you can transmit COVID-19 to the people around you.

Most people cease to be infectious within 5 days of getting COVID-19, but the time a person remains in their infectious stage varies, and it can exceed mandated quarantine periods. You can also still be infectious even when you are feeling better (and no longer have any symptoms).

**I’ve heard that people can have COVID-19 for up to 30 days after first contracting it – does this mean I cannot enter the court for a month if I get COVID-19?**

No. Although some people shed harmless genetic material for a long period after contracting the COVID-19 virus, a RAT test will only return a positive result if you are still infectious and can transmit COVID-19 to the people around you. Most people cease to be infectious within 5 days of getting COVID-19.

If you return a negative test on a RAT, you will be allowed to enter the County Court.