

Frequently Asked Questions

Electronic Breath alcohol testing (eBAT)

Q: Why test for alcohol?

A: Drug and alcohol abuse by their employees puts employers at a risk for increased accidents, more absenteeism, lower productivity, and higher insurance costs. Alcohol testing, like all drug testing strategies, helps to mitigate these risks from an employer's workforce by deterring drug use within it.

Employees who habitually consume excessive amounts of alcohol may have a tendency to be tardy, absent from work, suffer from health problems, and pose a greater risk of harming themselves and others.

Q: What sets Quest Diagnostics apart for alcohol testing?

A: Quest Diagnostics offers accurate, reliable employee alcohol and drug screening, an extensive national collection site network, and personal service and support. We use the industry standard breath alcohol technology, coupled with rigorous training and adherence to the highest quality standards, to offer industry-leading solutions for our clients.

Q: What is an eBAT?

A: An eBAT refers to the **electronic process** we follow to collect donor documentation and alcohol test results for breath alcohol testing. It's similar to our use of electronic Custody and Control Forms (eCCF) for drug tests. The Alcohol Testing Form (ATF) for a breath alcohol collection is transmitted electronically to the employer through our Employer Solutions Portal (ESP) or via web services. Today, the eBAT process requires a multipart ATF be completed by the alcohol technician, but the eBAT result will be captured electronically and returned to the sender of the order electronically.

Q: What key features set eBAT offered by Quest Diagnostics apart?

A: Quest Diagnostics offers breath alcohol testing using a conforming device listed by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). This is important because the device can perform both the initial alcohol screen as well as subsequent confirmations, if needed.

Q: How is the collector trained to complete an eBAT?

A: All technicians in our nationwide collection site network are trained following strict standards mirrored from the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) 49 CFR Part 40 guidelines for breath alcohol collections. Before a live collection, technicians complete a minimum of eight hours of hands-on training and are well-versed in the DOT's 49 CFR Part 40 alcohol testing procedures. Additionally, a technician must successfully complete a minimum of seven consecutive, error-free mock tests.

Q: What are the benefits of an electronic test ordering solution coupled with a breath alcohol collection?

A: eBATs allow for simplicity and time savings. Other benefits include:

- Online ordering. An employer does not need to provide the donor with a paper ATF when selecting a collection site that is enabled for eBATs. This also eliminates the need for an employer to warehouse and manage paper ATFs.
- All required donor information is entered by the employer upon requesting a collection.
- The donor information is then ready once the donor arrives at a Quest Diagnostics network collection site for alcohol testing.
- The employer ordering the eBAT can see real-time statuses and results, eliminating any questions about whether an alcohol test was completed.

Q: How does breath, or exhalation, measure Breath Alcohol Content (BrAC)?

A: BrAC may be measured through a chemical reaction triggered while using a breath alcohol testing device. While a donor is blowing into the breath alcohol device, as deep lung breath is reached, the sampling pump is activated. A small, fixed volume of deep lung breath is drawn onto the surface of the cell within the collection device, any alcohol detected is subsequently converted into acetic acid, electrons are released and a current is generated in proportion to the amount of alcohol oxidized. The resulting electric current is transmitted into a breath alcohol content and the result is displayed on the device as a numerical reading. If there is no alcohol present in the breath sample, no oxidation will occur, and the result will register as such.

Q: What is the window of alcohol detection for an eBAT?

A: The detection window for alcohol largely depends on how much alcohol has been consumed by an individual and the length of time since consumption. Alcohol is eliminated at the constant rate, on average about 0.015% blood alcohol content per hour, equating to approximately one drink per hour.

Q: Does Quest Diagnostics eBAT measure or determine impairment?

A: No. An eBAT provides a test result only, a determination of impairment or intoxication is not provided during the eBAT process. Quest Diagnostics follows the DOT guidelines set forth by the procedures for transportation workplace drug and alcohol testing programs, paying close attention to executing proper collections, equipment calibration, and the delivery of test results as numerical readings. Breath alcohol content is measured through exhaled breath using an evidential breath testing device.

Q: What are the cutoff levels for breath alcohol content detailed by the DOT?

A: The cutoff level is 0.019% for a final negative result and 0.020% or greater will be considered a positive screening test requiring a confirmatory test. Confirmatory tests at 0.020% or greater will be issued a final result of positive.

Q: What device is used to confirm a non-negative result for alcohol?

A: There are many devices on the market, but few can be used to conduct alcohol confirmation tests under federal regulations. Our sites use devices compliant with the DOT 49 CFR Part 40 regulations stating that only evidential breath testing (EBT) devices on the [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's](#) (NHTSA) conforming products list may be used for alcohol confirmation tests.

Q: What kind of device does Quest Diagnostics use for eBATs?

A: Quest Diagnostics exclusively uses evidential breath testing devices (EBT) because of their high standards of accuracy and their flexibility to perform and provide a full range of tests and results. eBAT-enabled sites in our network are equipped with an evidentiary breath alcohol testing device. This device is listed on the NHTSA's conforming products list and meets all necessary requirements to perform initial alcohol screens, as well as confirmation breath alcohol tests.

Q: What requirements must be met by a BAT device prior to its utilization?

A: DOT regulations under 49 CFR Part 40 state the required capabilities for an evidential breath testing device prior to its use. The device must:

- Provide a printed triplicate result (or 3 consecutive identical copies of a result) of each breath alcohol test
- Assign a unique number to each completed test, which the Breath Alcohol Technician and employee can read before each test, and is printed on each copy of the result
- Print the device manufacturer's name, its serial number, and the time of the test on each copy of the result
- Distinguish alcohol from acetone at the 0.02% alcohol concentration level
- Test an air blank
- Perform an external calibration check

Q: Can eBAT be combined with other forms of drug testing?

A: Yes. Any combination of drug tests can be requested and ordered with an eBAT. That said, due to the nature of how alcohol metabolizes in the body, a breath alcohol collection will occur before a urine, hair, or oral fluid drug test specimen is collected.


Q: Is the eBAT process legally admissible?

A: Yes. Quest Diagnostics uses an evidentiary breath testing device conforming to [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#) (NHTSA) requirements and which has the technical capability and complexity to produce results that may be admissible in a court of law.

Q: Will both Federal and non-Federal eBATs be available?

A: Yes, both federally regulated and non-federally regulated breath alcohol tests will be available by Quest Diagnostics.

Q: How can I tell which collection sites are eBAT enabled?

A: Our collection site locator in the Employer Solutions Portal (ESP) clearly identifies all sites in the Quest Diagnostics network that are able to provide eBAT testing. The collection site will be indicated with a blue  symbol to designate an eBAT enabled site. Alternatively, continuous updates will be made to our xml collection site web service, enabling customers who leverage this resource to locate eBAT enabled sites for their donors.

Q: Does the Quest Diagnostics appointment scheduler indicate sites that can perform eBAT?

A: The QuestDiagnostics.com/PSC appointment scheduler displays collection sites that can perform breath alcohol testing; however, eBAT testing requires an order to be placed for the breath alcohol test. Scheduling an appointment on this website for your donor is not an order for the eBAT.

Q: How is an eBAT result reported?

A: The reporting of eBAT results is dependent on the setup of the account. If the eBAT is ordered in the Employer Solutions Portal (ESP), then ESP is the where results will be reported. If the results were ordered via web services (not in the ESP User Interface), then the results will be returned to the sender via web services.

Q: How do I get an image of the Alcohol Test Form (ATF)?

A: If the eBAT was ordered through ESP, the image of the ATF will be available in the expanded result of the breath alcohol test. If the eBAT was ordered via web services, an account can be configured to deliver images of the ATF by fax or SFTP. All ATF images will be available on our imaging website for users with access. If eligible, you may request access to the imaging website by contacting our support center listed below.

Q: Who can I contact with questions about breath alcohol testing?

A: Contact your Sales or Account Management representative for more information or contact our National Customer Support Center by calling 1.877.676.4701.