

Innovative Work Health Solutions

Who We Are

We are a team of occupational health and safety professionals with 50+ years of combined experience in injury prevention and management programs. Our group includes physicians credentialed in occupational and emergency medicine, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, case managers, physical therapists, ADA coordinators, ergonomics specialists and other key professionals with experience in a variety of occupational settings. More importantly, we have a highly focused, value-driven approach to our programs and services for employers, carriers, and the individual worker. We lead each discussion both internally and customer-facing with an effort to deliver a clearly defined value for our relationships.

We are unique in our innovative approach to considering employee health, injuries, claims, and costs as separate but connected aspects

of an overall occupational health program. We welcome the opportunity to discuss your employee health and safety program needs.



Members of the Innovative Work Health Team attend the Maryland Workers' Comp Conference.



Inside this issue

Who We Are	1
Best Practices in Hiring.....	2
EEOC Sues PepsiCo.....	3
Safety in Hiring.....	4

Special points of interest

- Importance of best practice in hiring new employees
- EEOC actions against hiring discrimination





Respirator Fit Testing

What It Is, Why You Need It, and What You Can Expect

Healthcare staff who come into contact with people who have or may have COVID-19 are required to wear personal protective equipment (PPE). Respirators, such as N95 Filtering Facepiece Respirators (N95 FFRs) and elastomeric respirators, that fit your face properly help prevent the spread of germs. Your respirator must be fit tested before you use it for the first time and then once each year.

What Is Fit Testing?

Fit testing is the method for finding the respirator that fits your face and making sure it provides a tight seal to help keep you protected.

"Your respirator must be fit tested before you use it for the first time and then once each year."

What is a Respirator Fit Test?

A fit test is conducted to verify that a respirator is both comfortable and correctly fits the user. Fit test methods are classified as either qualitative or quantitative. A qualitative fit test is a pass/fail test that relies on the individual's sensory detection of a test agent, such as taste, smell, or involuntary cough (a reaction to irritant smoke*). A quantitative fit test uses an instrument to numerically measure the effectiveness of the respirator.

The benefits of a fit test include better protection for the employee and verification that the employee is wearing a correctly-fitting model and size of respirator.¹ Higher than expected levels of exposure to a contaminant may occur if the respirator has a poor face seal against the user's skin, which can result in leakage.

(Continued from above)

Why Do You Need To Be Fit Tested?

Fit testing helps ensure you wear the right respirator to protect you from germs and prevent you from spreading germs to others. Your healthcare facility is expected to provide you with adequate PPE, including a respirator that fits correctly. Sizes of respirators are not the same across models or brands.

If you need to wear a respirator, like an N95 FFR, to perform your job, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires your healthcare facility to follow the Respiratory Protection Standard (29 CFR 1910.134). Respirator fit testing is just one important part of a healthcare facility's Respiratory Protection Program.

Any respirator (N95 FFR or elastomeric) must be fit tested before the first use if your job exposes you to people who have or may have COVID-19. After that, your employer should test your fitting with the respirator every year and whenever something happens that could affect the seal. The respirator seal may be affected by physical changes, including weight loss or gain, having or growing facial hair, or dental procedures that change the shape of your face.





Why are annual FIT TESTS required? OSHA

requires annual fit testing: 29 CFR 1910.134

Administrator



Time for your annual fit testing!



It usually only takes 15–20 minutes.

Bottom line...



If your respirator doesn't fit, it can't efficiently protect you. **OSHA requires annual fit testing: 29 CFR 1910.134**

Worker



Can we do this another day? I've got so much to do.



I'm busy. You're busy. Why is it necessary to do this EVERY YEAR?

NIOSH Facts



NIOSH research confirms the need for annual testing: 10% of subjects failed a fit test after 1 year using the same make, model, and size respirator.



NIOSH research also suggests that those who have lost > 20lbs should prioritize getting fit tested again right away. Other facial changes requiring fit testing include significant weight gain, extensive dental work, scarring, or cosmetic surgery.



Respirator fit **CAN** change over time. If your respirator doesn't fit, it doesn't work.



If the respirator fit is unacceptable, the worker must be given the opportunity to select a different respirator and be retested.



Sources: OSHA Fit Testing Procedures 1910.134, Appendix A, https://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=STANDARDS&p_id=9780 New NIOSH Study Supports the OSHA Annual Fit Testing Requirements for Filtering Facepiece Respirators, <http://blogs.cdc.gov/niosh-science-blog/2016/01/05/fit-testing/>

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Center for Disease Control and Prevention National
Institute for Occupational Safety and Health



FIT TESTING

Over 3 million United States employees, in approximately 1.3 million workplaces, are required to wear respiratory protection. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) (29 CFR 1910.134) requires an annual respirator fit test to confirm the fit of any respirator that forms a tight seal on the wearer's face before it is used in the workplace. This ensures that users are receiving the expected level of protection by minimizing any contaminant leakage into the facepiece. The following are some frequently asked questions about respiratory protection and fit testing.



We Can Help keep you OSHA Certified!



Innovative Work Health technicians are trained to provide fit testing with a wide variety of respirators. Testing can be completed in our office or on-site with employers. IWH will provide the documentation necessary to maintain compliance with OSHA regulations.

Reach out to us today for more information and to schedule your annual OSHA compliant respirator fit testing.

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Contact Us

If you are interested in learning more about Innovative Work Health and the services we provide, please reach out to our team today.

We offer comprehensive complimentary employer risk and safety program assessment. Please contact an Innovative Work Health Solutions representative for your complimentary consultation.

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