

General RPP Questions

1. Does the staff member performing fit testing need to be certified?

There are NO certifications for administering fit tests. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires the Program Administrator to have an adequate level of training or experience to deal with the complexity of the respiratory protection program at the worksite. The requirements for the Respiratory Protection Program Administrator can be reviewed in 29 CFR1910.134(c)(3):

<https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.134>

2. What is the difference between a public and private employee?

An employee of a community health center is a “private” employee, and thus under federal OSHA. An example of a “public” employee would be somebody working for a city or state agency.

3. If someone fails the fit test with a N-95 are they provided with Powered Air Purifying Respirator (PAPR)?

The OSHA guidance states, “If the employee finds the fit of the respirator unacceptable, he or she must be given a reasonable opportunity to select a different respirator and to be retested. In addition, retesting is required whenever an employee reports, or the employer, physician or other licensed health care professional (PLHCP), supervisor, or program administrator observe changes in an employee's physical condition that could affect respirator fit. Such conditions include, but are not limited to, facial scarring, dental changes (e.g., wearing new dentures), cosmetic surgery, or an obvious change in body weight.”

Please review guidance here: https://www.osha.gov/dts/osta/otm/otm_viii/otm_viii_2.html#6

Respirator Selection/Use

1. Is a seal test required for each use of a N-95 mask?

Yes, tight-fitting respirators, including N-95s, require a user seal check each time you put one on to help ensure the best fit possible. More information found here:

<https://blogs.cdc.gov/niosh-science-blog/2020/03/16/n95-preparedness/>

2. How long can a person reuse their N-95? Is there a way to disinfect the disposable N-95?

It would depend on the respirator make/model. It is recommended to reach out to the manufacturer of the N-95 you are using. Also, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has made available a number of resources/information on reuse and extended use of respirators:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/decontamination-reuse-respirators.html>

3. Can N-95 masks be utilized without fit testing?

If a staff member chooses to use an N-95 mask voluntarily, that is without being required as part of the organizational respiratory protection program, a fit test is not required. If the N-95 is required by the organizational respiratory protection program, both a fit test and a medical evaluation are required, along with proper fit test training.

4. What about KN95 masks? Should employees be fit tested for those as well?

KN95 fit tests should be treated the same as the N-95 fit test. Be careful as some KN95 masks are counterfeit (not certified and do not meet requirements for use).

5. How would we know if the KN95 is certified?

Please see the link to find respirators authorized for emergency use by healthcare personnel during the COVID-19 public health emergency:

<https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-emergency-use-authorizations-medical-devices/personal-protective-equipment-euas#respirators>

6. What are the recommendations on cleaning PPE hoods post-fit test between employees? Has COVID impacted recommendations?

Please review this guidance from 3M on Fit Test Hygiene During COVID-19 Pandemic:

<https://multimedia.3m.com/mws/media/1819154O/fit-test-hygiene-during-covid-19-pandemic.pdf>

7. I work in a health center where many providers have beards and mustaches as part of their religious practices, What would you recommend for respiratory protection in this case?

Please review this guidance: <https://blogs.cdc.gov/niosh-science-blog/2017/11/02/noshave/>

Medical Evaluation

1. Is a medical evaluation required for each staff member using an N-95 mask, and not just for PAPR and 1/2 mask fit testing?

If you use any respirator (except PAPR) in your organizational respiratory protection program, a fit-test is required for each type of respirator you use. Example - if you fit-tested employees on 3M N-95s, but procured a different make/model, a new fit-test is required.

2. Does OSHA provide a sample of how the medical evaluation should look like?

Please see the following links for medical evaluation guidance and template:

<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3789info.pdf>

<https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.134AppC>