

Fit Testing Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q: What is a Fit Test?

A: Fit testing is a practical examination to ensure tight-fitting Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE), for example Filtering Face Piece (FFP) 3, mask can properly seal around a wearer's face and is therefore suitable for the individual.

As people and respirators come in a variety of different shapes and sizes, not every facepiece will fit every person. Therefore, it is essential that a person be fit tested per make/model of respirator mask, in order to confirm that a tight seal is achievable. If a tight seal is not achievable, that type of respirator will not provide its intended protection, leaving the subject vulnerable to infection.

Q: Do I have to undergo a fit test?

A: If you are likely to come into contact with a patient with a suspected or confirmed respiratory illness, you must wear RPE. A fit test is required before RPE is used to ensure a tight fit (seal) between the wearers face and the respirator is achieved in order to provide protection. Examples of respiratory illnesses include measles, chicken pox and influenza.

Q: Why is fit testing required?

A: Fit testing of RPE is a legal requirement and is essential to ensure you and your staff/colleagues' safety. Furthermore, Measles cases have been rising since late 2023, with clusters in a number of regions, including London. Clinical staff must wear an FFP3 respirator when in contact with suspected or confirmed Measles cases and other microorganisms that spread via the airborne/respiratory route.

Q: I've had the MMR vaccine, does that mean I do not need to wear RPE if treating a patient with suspected or confirmed measles?

A: Vaccines do not provide 100% protection; therefore, vaccinated individuals are still required to wear RPE

Q: Can I carry out Fit testing?

A: Fit testing should be conducted by a competent person.

Q: Can I wear a FFP3 respirator without fit testing?

A: RPE such as FFP3s are only protective if you have been fit tested and trained in the correct method of application. Safe donning and doffing are essential to prevent self-contamination.

Fit testing is a requirement by the Health and Safety Executive

Q: Can I wear a Fluid resistant surgical mask (FRSM) instead of an FFP3 respirator?

A: No. A FFP3 respirator provides a higher level of protection.

Q: Where can I have fit testing done?

A: North East London (NEL) Health and Care Partnership / NHS NEL have partnered with Sunbelt Rentals to provide a fit testing service locally to HCWs in the following places: Havering, Redbridge, Barking and Dagenham, Newham, and Waltham Forest.

HCWs in City and Hackney can access Fit testing at Homerton Health Care, however, can also use the service.

Q: How do I book the session?

A: Please use this link <https://www.sunbeltrentals.co.uk/training/courses/face-fit-testing/>

Or scan the QR code.



Please note, Sunbelt Rentals refers to fit testing as a Fit Testing course/training session.

Q: What will be included in the Fit Test session?

A: A Fit2fit qualified RPE technician will provide information on how to Don and Doff the mask, how to conduct a pre-use check to identify any leaks and give guidance (if

required) on how to maintain and inspect re-useable half masks. Finally, each wearer will undertake two tests.

Q: How long will the training session take?

A The sessions will take approximately 45 minutes to complete.

Q: How much will it cost?

A: The cost will be £50 + VAT per person. This fee also includes the supply of two masks for you to return to work with.

Q: How do I pay?

A: Only card payments are accepted via Sunbelts website.

Q: Should I buy masks before fit testing?

A: No. After you have had your fit test, the technician will advise you about the masks to purchase.

Q: Where is the location of the fit testing training?

A: There are two Venues:

- 3rd Floor A Block, St Leonards Hospital, Nuttall Street, N1 5LZ (this site does not have a lift)
- Sunbelt Rentals, Kingsbridge Road, Barking, IG11 0BD

Q: What time will the Fit Test sessions be held?

A: Fit testing will be held at various times. There will be slots available during the day, evening and on Saturdays.

Q: Do I have to do anything specifically for the fit test?

A: Yes.

- In order to conduct a face fit test all wearers must be clean shaven in the area of the seal. **If you are unable to shave, please do not book a fit testing session.**

- You must be medically fit to conduct a Face Fit Test in accordance with the INDG479
- **No smoking, vaping, eating or drinking for up to one hour before the test.** This includes chewing gum and sweets. Non-flavoured water is allowed.
- If prescription glasses are normally worn, please bring them with you as these must be worn throughout the test.
- **You must be clean shaven** - A fit test cannot be conducted if there is any hair growth between the wearer's skin and the face piece of the mask. This is stated in the COSHH Regulations, you must be clean shaven 8 hours prior to start of work shift. A trimmed goatee beard and moustache inside the seal of the mask would be acceptable.
- Minimal makeup must be worn to ensure the mask does not move during the tests.
- Hair should be tied up for the test.
- In line with HSE requirements, mask straps need to be worn under religious headwear to reduce the chance of the straps slipping, which in turn could lead to a compromise in the face seal. To provide the wearer with privacy and respect, our technician will leave the room to enable the mask to be donned and doffed.
- The room at St Leonards Hospital is on the 3rd floor. Access is via 3 flights of stairs. Please do not book this site if you are not able to use the stairs.

Q: Why should I use the service offered by Sunbelt Rentals?

A: The advantage of this service is that it enables you to pay-per-person for fit testing with an accredited, eliminating the need to cover a fit test technicians fees for onsite visits when only a few individuals require testing. However, you can select any accredited provider from the Fit2Fit website to conduct fit testing for your practice.

Q: Is there a difference between fit testing and a fit check?

A: Yes.

Fit testing: This is required to ensure there is an adequate personal fit and seal to protect the wearer from fine aerosols containing virus particles.

Fit check: The practice of the wearer checking their respirator for fit every time it is used. Following a successful fit test, the wearer is responsible for checking for fit every time the respirator is put on.

Q: How often do I need to complete fit testing?

A: You should be fit tested at least every two years to ensure your respirator continues to fit you properly. Because each brand, model, and size of respirators will fit slightly different, you should be fit tested every time you wear a new model, manufacturer type/brand, or size. If your weight changes or facial/dental alterations occur, a fit test should be repeated to ensure your respirator remains effective. A fit test report will be produced following each successful fit test. The user will receive a detailed explanation of the results. The fit test report will be valid for 2 years.

Q: Can I use any brand/make/model respirator after I pass the fit test if it is the same size?

A: No. A fit test only qualifies you to use the specific brand/make/model/size of respirator for which you successfully passed a fit test. You should only wear the specific brand, model, and size respirator that you wore during a successful fit test.

Q: Are there different types of fit tests?

A: Yes

There are two types of Fit tests: Qualitative fit testing (QLFT) and quantitative fit testing (QNFT). QLFT is a pass/fail test based on the wearer's subjective assessment of any leakage through the face seal region by detecting the introduction of bitter- or sweet-tasting aerosol as a test agent. QLFT is not suitable for full-face masks.

QNFT provides a numerical measure of how well a facepiece seals against a wearer's face; this is called a fit factor. These tests give an objective measure of face fit. QNFT methods are suitable for disposable and reusable half masks and full-face masks. This is the type of fit testing that will be provided during the training.

Sunbelt Rentals will use the QNFT method.

Q: How does the collaboration with Sunbelt Rentals benefit NHS NEL/NEL Health and Care Partnership?

A: The benefit to NHS NEL is increasing access to frontline health care workers to fit testing, thus reducing the likelihood of harm from infection.

Q: I have a question, who do I contact?

A: You can contact NEL Infection Prevention Control Team via email nelondonibc.ipc@nhs.net