



Face Fit Testing

Course Code: RPE1

Introduction

There are two methods of Face Fit Testing, Quantitative and Qualitative, both are approved by the HSE.

Face Fit Testing must be carried out by an competent person.

Our Competent Face Fit Testers will ensure your employees and yourself are tested in line with BS ISO 16975:2017 Fit-Testing Procedures and HSE Publication IND 479.

The Quantitative and Qualitative objectives are to recreate a working environment and to test the Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE). RPE must fit the wearer correctly leading to a good seal whilst they are working.

Please note Quantitative (QNFT) will be by special appointment and is not included in our Face Fit Testing.

RESULTS

A Fit Test Report Certificate shall be issued to the candidate and to the employer as applicable

GOOD REASONS FOR FUTURE RETESTS BEFORE THE RECOMMENDED TWO YEAR RE-TEST

A fit test should be repeated whenever there is a change to the RPE type, size, model or material or whenever there is a change to the circumstances of the wearer that could alter the fit of the RPE; for example:

- weight loss or gain;
- substantial dental work;
- any facial changes (scars, moles, effects of ageing etc) around the face seal area;
- facial piercings;
- introduction or change in other head-worn personal protective equipment (PPE).

In some situations, however, more frequent repeat fit testing may be appropriate, particularly where RPE is being used as a primary or sole means of control.

If there is a change in the make, model or size of RPE in use, a fit test is to be conducted prior to its first use.

Good practice is to discuss repeat fit testing at the initial fit testing stage so that an appropriate retest period can be entered into the fit test report.

As part of your RPE programme, it is good practice to have a system in place to review when a repeat fit test may be required. For example, face shape will change through ageing alone.

Content

WHAT HAPPENS IN THE TEST.

The candidate will be required to complete the following exercises whilst standing up and to read aloud the "Rainbow Passage".

Exercise

(i) Normal breathing

The wearer should breathe normally with no head movements or talking.

(ii) Deep breathing

The wearer should breathe slowly and deeply, taking care not to hyperventilate.

(iii) Turning head side to side

The wearer should slowly turn their head from side to side between the extreme positions on each side (approximately 15–20 times per minute). The head shall be held at each extreme momentarily, so the wearer can inhale at each side

(iv) Moving head up and down

The wearer should slowly move their head up and down (approximately 15–20 times per minute). The wearer should be instructed to inhale in the up position (ie when looking toward the ceiling).

(v) Talking

The wearer should talk slowly and loudly enough to be heard clearly by the fit tester. The wearer



should read from a standard reading passage or count down from 100.

(vi) Bending over

From a normal standing position, the wearer should bend at the waist as if to touch their toes and then return to an upright position. Repeat approximately 10–15 times throughout the duration of the exercise.

(vii) Normal breathing

Same as exercise (i).

The use of the “Rainbow Passage” below is the preferred standard reading passage to be used in the talking exercise. (occasionally you may count speaking aloud 100 to 0 backwards)

‘When the sunlight strikes raindrops in the air, they act like a prism and form a rainbow. The rainbow is a division of white light into many beautiful colours. These take the shape of a long round arch, with its path high above, and its two ends apparently beyond the horizon. There is, according to legend, a boiling pot of gold at one end. People look, but no one ever finds it. When a man looks for something beyond his reach, his friends say he is looking for the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow’

OTHER CONDITIONS THAT CAN ADVERSELY AFFECT FIT

The fit test should be conducted with the RPD worn in the manner in which it is used. Not every individual may be able to obtain a satisfactory fit. For example, certain facial characteristics may interfere with RPD fit, such as hollow temples, excessively protruding cheekbones, deep skin creases, scars, the absence of teeth or dentures, injury to the face and swelling of the mouth or face.

RPD wearers who have dentures shall be fit tested:

- a) with dentures, if they wear them while wearing the RPD in the workplace; or
- b) without dentures, if they do not wear them while wearing the RPD in the workplace.

All the tests take 15 minutes, depending on failure. Once the candidate has passed the face fit, they will be issued with their certificate showing their details, RPE details & Date Tested.

The wearer may have a peace of mind that the RPE selected is performing, as long as the mask is being donned (Put on) correctly & maintained.

Aim

Face Fit Testing of candidates



Participants

Persons who require a Face Fit Test

CANDIDATE REQUIREMENTS

It is important to know that some pre-existing medical conditions (for example, breathing disorders such as asthma; skin allergies; or even heart problems) may restrict or prevent some workers wearing any RPE, or certain types of RPE.

You will need to ensure that workers are fit to wear the selected and required RPE. If you are unsure, you (the employer) should arrange for appropriate medical assessment by a qualified medical professional practitioner.

The candidate will have to perform some simple exercises whilst wearing the selected face piece. These will be Normal & Deep Breathing, Head side to side, Up/Down, counting Aloud and Bending Over.

These are the times when the RPE may fail & leak! During the Quantitative test the candidate will have to walk/step to increase their breathing whilst performing the above exercises.

The mask being used for the fit test should be in good condition and it must be equipped with particulate filters (or combination with particulate filters). When fit testing a negative pressure half mask the filter(s) should be as close as possible to the weight and dimensions of those used in the workplace.

We reserve the right to refuse to test any RPE / RPD respiratory protective device which we believe is soiled, damaged or for any other reason that we believe it is unfit.

BRING WITH YOU PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) AND OTHER ITEMS THAT MAY INTERFERE WITH FIT THAT YOU WEAR WHEN USING YOUR RPD.

When any PPE and/or RPD accessory has the potential to interfere with the seal, it shall be worn during the fit test to ascertain compatibility with the RPD.

For example, eye glasses, goggles, face shield, head protection, skull cap, hearing protection, welding helmet, hoods or other protective devices can potentially interfere with the seal of the RPD. This applies to all tight-fitting RPD.



The competent fit-test operator should record the make and model of PPE and/or RPD accessory worn during the fit test. Subsequently, if the make/model of PPE and/or RPD accessory changes, the RPD programme administrator will need to decide whether a new fit test is required in order to assess compatibility of the new combination.

Certification

A Fit Test Report Certificate shall be issued on completion of the Face Fit Test.

This is a PASS or FAIL Assessment of the fitting of the RPD. It does not qualify an individual for anything other than demonstrating the RPD fits the individual.

Speak to a course advisor

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