

Fit testing of the N95 particulate respirator for workers has been mandated by the Ministry of Labour. This fit testing will be done every two years (biennial).

**What is an N95 respirator?**

- A device that has met legislated standards and has been designated to protect the wearer from respiratory hazards in the workplace.
- Approved for use by NIOSH (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health in the U.S.).
- Is fluid resistant, disposable and may be worn in surgery. The "N" means "not resistant to oil" and the "95" refers to the filter efficiency.
- A surgical mask is not a respirator.
- Respirators with an exhalation valve cannot be used for sterile procedures.

**When do I need to wear an N95 respirator?**

- To protect against airborne transmission of infectious agents or toxic materials.
- Refer to [Nipissing University N95 Respiratory Protection Program and Procedures](#).

**Why do I need to be fit tested?**

- To provide the respirator user with instructions on how to properly fit a respirator to your face and the importance of achieving a suitable seal, thus ensuring that you are properly protected.

**How do I prepare for fit testing?**

- Complete Sections 1, 2 and 3 (Medical Screening Assessment) of the Respirator Fit Test Record form. Information is collected by Environmental Health and Safety and is placed on the employee's confidential health record. Assessment is necessary to identify any staff, student, faculty, visitor and contractor that may be unable to wear an N95 respirator for health reasons.

**Preparing for the test**

- Refrain from gum chewing, smoking, eating or drinking (other than water) 15-30 minutes prior to testing as this may interfere with the test.
- Must be clean shaven around the seal of mask, therefore no facial hair where the respirator meets the face.
- You will receive a certificate card acknowledging and identifying the respirator you have been successfully tested on. You should carry this card with you while at work.

**Can I be fit tested if I have a beard?**

- **No.** A beard will interfere with the ability to get a good seal. Respirator wearers must be clean-shaven where the respirator seals to the face. If a respirator wearer is required to wear the respirator during the

course of their duties then they must continue to be clean-shaven after passing the fit test.

**What happens if I can't be fit tested?**

- If you are unable to attain a proper seal with any of the available respirators, you may be assessed by an outside agency in an effort to find protective gear that will fit or be evaluated for accommodation.

**When should fit testing be repeated?**

- Every two years
- When a satisfactory fit test has not been achieved
- A change in one's physical condition such as obvious weight gain/loss or there is a change in facial features or there is a change in medical condition.

**How do I put on an N95 respirator and know if I am getting a good seal?**

- Use only the respirator fitted to you.
- Be fit tested to the manufacturers recommendations
- Visually inspect respirator to ensure no defects, etc. prior to use.
- An occlusive fit and a clean shave provide the best protection.
- Always perform two seal checks at donning the respirator.
  - Negative pressure (inhalation check)
  - Positive pressure (exhalation check)
- Instructions are provided on the certificate card issued at the time of fit testing.

**How long can I wear my respirator?**

- There are no published data on the *length of time* the respirator is effective for the wearer. Health Canada recommends they be changed if they become wet, interfere with breathing, come in contact with respiratory droplets, are damaged or visibly soiled.
- They are disposable and should be discarded after each use.

**How do I remove my respirator?**

- Wash your hands prior to handling the respirator.
- Carefully remove your respirator using the straps taking care not to touch the front of the respirator. Discard.
- Wash your hands after handling the respirator.

**Where should the respirator be disposed of?**

- In a hazardous waste container if used in conjunction with biohazardous or chemically hazardous materials.
- In a general waste container if used in conjunction with allergenic organisms or materials.
- For more information refer to the [Hazardous Materials Disposal Guide](#).