

N95 Fit Test Tips

The following is a list of respirator fit testing tips that DOH has found helpful over the years. The tips with an asterisk (*) are required by the Safety Standards for Respirators WAC 296-824. We found these are commonly misinterpreted and consequently invalidates the fit test.

Topic	Tips!
Fit Testing Supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider purchasing bottles <u>and</u> ampules for BOTH sensitivity and fit test solutions to decrease waste. (One ampule provides about 1-3 fit tests.) • Consider purchasing more than one fit test kit, as well as extra hoods, especially if you have multiple fit test conductors. Hoods need time to dry between fit tests. • Both bitter and sweet are approved solutions for qualitative fit testing. The bitter (Bitrex) has a distinguished taste and there is a better chance for detection if the respirator seal fails. (See Using Saccharin Solutions below.)
Setting up Fit Test Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have drinking water available. Use disposable cups for staff to rinse out their mouth when a sink is not available. • Arrange the staff getting fit tested so that they are close to both you and your equipment.
Preparing Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If it's difficult to find the nebulizer hole in the 'window' of the hood, try marking the hole with a permanent marker. • For easier identification, mark the sensitivity nebulizer and solution bottle with a matching color. • If you are conducting two fit tests at the same time, number your hoods. This helps each person to remember which is their hood after the sensitivity test.
Fit Testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When administering sprays, use the nebulizer to gently "pull" the hood forward. Also, if your hood comes with a collar, you can use the hole in the collar to pull the hood forward. • Squeeze the nebulizer a couple of times to each side of the hood instead of twisting the wrist with every spray. This can reduce wrist strain and time between squeezes. • Each fit test must begin with "no taste". Rinsing their mouth and cleaning their face after tasting the solution (after the sensitivity test and a failed respirator fit test) is crucial! This step is very important to reduce the possibility of a false respirator seal failure. • Fit test equipment can be purchased by the part (example: bulb, atomizer, hood). However, some parts are not interchangeable with different manufacturers' equipment. • The fit test is done while standing.* The fit test can be done seated if the person does all their work while seated. • During the bend-over exercise, instruct them to hold their hood to avoid their hood slip off their head. If a hood falls off during the test, restart the fit test from the beginning.

	<p>When testing a large group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Print all the medical letters of recommendation and use them to record the fit test results temporarily. Transfer the information to the fit test record before the end of the day. • Pair fit test conductors. One can focus on sensitivity screening and help with issues that come up, such as a failed fit test. The other can focus on fit tests. You must clearly record the result of the sensitivity test on the fit test record or recommendation letter. • With practice, a fit test conductor may be able to fit test more than one person at a time. Our recommendation is to fit test no more than two people at the same time. • If fit testing more than four hours, rinse the nebulizers with warm water and use the cleaning wire to clean the atomizer. To avoid diluting the test solutions, flush the nebulizers with air to clear out any remaining water if not able to completely dry before the next test.*
Record-keeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Records all results from the fit test including the failed respirators.*
Cleaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the manufacturer’s instructions for the appropriate contact time. Alcohol has a short contact time. • Only use unscented products. • DO NOT USE products with bleach for sanitizing the hood. Bleach is a respiratory hazard.
Storing the hoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When storing your hood, avoid bending or folding the ‘window’ of the hood. This will help preserve the life of your hood.
Troubleshooting	
Leaky Bottles: Storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With a new bottle of solution, do not remove the foil top. Instead, puncture a small hole through the foil for flow control and to decrease the possibility of the bottles leaking. • Store solutions upright instead of sideways in the box.
Leaky Nebulizer: During Testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not overpour the solution! Use about a half-teaspoon of solution and stay below the O-ring (the black ring). • Check the atomizer frequently to be sure it is not clogged. Swap or clean the atomizer.
Using Saccharine Solutions (Saccharine crystalizes easily; it requires special attention.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If crystals are in the test solution bottle, run warm water over the bottle to dissolve the crystals. • Rinsing the nebulizer every four hours may not be enough. Consider rinsing the nebulizer every two hours or more often. • Change the atomizer with a clean, dry one every two to three fit tests. Soak the ‘used’ atomizer in warm water to soften any buildup before using the cleaning wire. • Closely monitor the volume of mist your nebulizer produces. If using an atomizer that is clogged or partially clogged, the fit tests will be considered invalid.*

* Required activity per WAC 296-824

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