

Toolbox talk - Qualitative fit testing (QLFT):



1. The protocols are initiated by first determining the wearer's ability to detect the test agent (e.g. saccharin, isoamyl acetate, Bitrex™) at a sensitivity level that corresponds to less than an acceptable fit before put on (donning) the tight-fitting face piece respirator. The wearer enters an exposure chamber, has a test enclosure placed on his/her head, or is positioned somewhere in an open test area and the test agent is generated around him/her. The wearer signals when the test agent is sensed. The fit test operator proceeds with the fit test only if the demonstrated sensitization level is low enough to assure the test agent will be sensed at all levels representing a failure to achieve an acceptable fit. [**Note:** Isoamyl acetate, being an organic vapor, cannot be used as a test agent for particulate respirators.]
2. Next, the wearer follows the manufacturer's instructions to put on what initially seems to be the best fitting respirator provided by the employer.
3. The wearer then completes a user seal check to confirm that the respirator is properly seated on the face
4. The wearer then enters an exposure chamber, has a test enclosure placed on his/her head, or is positioned somewhere in an open test area. The test agent is generated at the designated test level around the subject.
5. The fit test operator observes the worker during exposure while directing him/her through a series of exercises. The fit test operator notes involuntary coughing (irritant smoke) during the test or asks the wearer at the end of the test if he or she smelled or tasted anything at any time during the test. From the test subject's response and the fit test operator's observations, the fit test operator determines a pass/fail judgment by which the respirator make, model and size may be assigned to the wearer.