

N95 Fit Testing FAQ

- How do I fit test someone with facial hair?

Facial hair can interfere with the seal between the respirator and the face. Fit testing should not be performed on employees with facial hair between the seal and face because of the inability to create an acceptable air-tight barrier. Tight-fitting respirators (both negative and positive pressure) shall not be used with beards or other facial hair or any other condition that prevents direct contact between the face and the edge of the respirator or interferes with valve function. Employees who may be exposed to potentially infectious aerosols in the course of their work are encouraged to remain clean shaven or be prepared to shave on short notice when respiratory protection is required. Patient care employees with personal objections to being clean shaven (e.g., religious, cultural, medical, etc.) should be provided with loose-fitting powered air-purifying respirators (PARP) or should avoid providing patient care to potentially infectious aerosol cases. Facial hair that does not interfere with the seal between the respirator and face is not preferred but is acceptable. Refer to Appendix A of the potentially infectious aerosol respiratory protection program for illustrations. Note that facial hair includes stubble.

- What do I do if an employee has a “YES” answer on the medical clearance questionnaire?

Instruct this employee to call Employee Health Services office for a telephonic assessment. Depending on the nature of the “YES” answer and the results of the telephonic assessment the person may be cleared by Employee Health Services or may be asked to come in for an in-person assessment. Please visit the Employee Health Services Portal page for information regarding the phone number.

- What do I do if someone fails a fit test?

Attempt a re-test with an alternative size or style respirator, if available. If fit testing is unsuccessful with all available sizes and styles, counsel the person that they have not been successfully fitted and *will not be protected by the respirator*. They should be instructed to not wear a respirator and to avoid situations where respirator use is required. If these situations are not avoidable for the employee, refer them for instruction on powered air purifiers PARP.