

# Fit checking & fit testing of P2/N95 masks



**NSWNMA advice for residential aged care**

**Both fit testing and fit checking are critical to ensuring that P2/N95 masks are providing an appropriate level of protection for the wearer.**

Fit checking by the wearer without fit testing to ensure they are wearing the right mask is not adequate.

## Fit testing

A fit test is a test protocol conducted to verify the size/ make and model of respirator (including P2/N95) is both comfortable and provides the wearer with the expected protection. It must be undertaken for all workers required to wear a P2/N95 with the test repeated annually.

There are two methods of fit testing 'Quantitative' and 'Qualitative'. Fit testing must be done by a trained and competent person and specialised equipment is required. Quantitative fit testing is done using a machine called a porta count and gives a numerical measure of the fit. Qualitative methods are based on the worker detecting leakage through the face seal region using a bitter/sweet tasting aerosol or odour compounds i.e. saccharin.

Fit testing requirements are in place for residential aged care facilities as detailed in the following documents provided to the sector:

1. *Infection Control Expert Group: Guidance on infection prevention and control for residential care facilities in the context of COVID-19*
2. *ACQSC Outbreak management planning in aged care*

There are many companies who can come and do on-site fit testing. The Australian Institute of Occupational Hygienists has developed a national training and accreditation program for fit testers and provides a searchable list at the following website <https://respfite.org.au>\*



**Quantitative fit testing**



**Qualitative fit testing**

## Fit checking

Each time a tight-fitting respirator is put on, the worker must carry out a fit check.

A fit check is a quick check to ensure the respirator is properly positioned on the face and that there is the best seal possible on the day.

Workers should receive training on how to conduct a fit check and undergo competency assessment to ensure they are able to fit check effectively. Industry best practice is to have PPE "spotters" or a buddy system in place to ensure that workers properly fit check each time they apply PPE.

Fit checks do not replace the need for a fit test.

\*NSWNMA does not endorse any particular fit testing provider.

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Authorised by S.Candish, General Secretary, NSWNMA | September 2022 | 1.2

