

KNOWING THE DIFFERENCE: FIT TEST VS USER SEAL CHECK



A respirator can't protect you if it doesn't fit your face.

Fit Test

- Performed once a year or when a new respirator will be used
- Performed by a trained person

Quantitative- Portacount test

There are 2 types of fit test: quantitative and qualitative.

Qualitative fit test are most common in small businesses. OSHA doesn't require fit test administrators to be certified, just to know how to conduct and interpret a test with appropriate testing equipment.



Qualitative (pass/fail)

- Bitrex, Saccharin, Banana Oil/Smoke
- Use OSHA approved fit testing protocols



Before an employee uses any respirator with a tight-fitting face piece, the employee must be fit tested with the same make, model, style, and size of respirator that will be used.

User Seal (Fit) Check

- Performed every time a respirator is worn
- Performed by the wearer (once properly trained)

Seal checks are not a regulatory substitute or alternative to fit tests.

Positive-pressure check:



1. Block the exhalation valve cover with the palm of your hand.
2. Exhale gently into the facepiece, creating a slight positive pressure.
3. If you can feel air leaking under the facepiece, reposition it and repeat steps 1 and 2 until you have an effective seal

Negative-pressure check:



1. Cover the inlet openings of the cartridges or canisters with the palms of your hands and inhale gently so that the facepiece collapses.
2. Hold your breath for about 10 seconds. The seal is effective if the facepiece stays collapsed.
3. If the facepiece expands or you can feel air leaking under the facepiece, reposition it and repeat steps 1 and 2

***If repositioning the respirator does not resolve the air leak for the positive or negative pressure check, try a different N95 size/model respirator.**