

# Mask Fit Testing Fact Sheet for Staff

## Particulate Filter Respirator (PFR) Fit Testing

### What is a PFR fit test?

Fit testing is a method used to evaluate the fit of a specific make, model and size of PFR and to ensure it is worn correctly. An inadequate seal between PFR and person's face can result in contaminated air entering your lungs. There are two methods used to evaluate the fit of a specific PFR: - [qualitative or quantitative](#).

- A qualitative fit test is fast and simple but can be influenced by the wearer. It relies on the wearer's senses to determine if there is a gap in the seal of the PFR to the wearer's face. A test agent such as saccharin or Bitrex™ (a bitter tasting substance) is used at a sensitivity level that demonstrates the user will be able to appropriately sense the presence of the test agent within the PFR by taste, smell or the urge to cough
- Quantitative fit testing requires the use of specialised particle counting equipment (such as a PortaCount™ Plus machine) to provide quantitative, or numerical, measurements of the amount of face seal leakage present when a given PFR is donned by a user.

### What is a PFR fit check?

A fit check must be performed each time a PFR is put on (donned) to ensure the PFR is correctly applied. This includes making sure there is a good seal over the bridge of the nose and mouth with no gaps between the PFR and the face.

### PFR types and models

There are several different PFR types, styles and models. These are referred to as PFR's, also known as P2, N95 respirators or equivalent. The fit testing operator will select the PFR most likely to fit you and confirm this is the suitable mask by performing a fit testing procedure. There are several sizes, makes and models of PFRs used in SA Health including (but not limited to)

- Flat Fold style
- Duck bill style
- Cup style

### Who requires PFR fit testing?

Under the Australian/New Zealand Standards, it is recommended that all workers who are required to wear PFRs are required to undergo fit testing. This includes caring for patients/residents/clients who have a known or suspected airborne disease such as COVID-19 or tuberculosis (TB).

### What PFR do I wear?

Staff should ensure that they only wear the make, model, type and size of the PFR that they were fitted with during their fit test. It is recommended that the manager records each staff member's Fit Test results so the correct PFRs can be available at the facility.

### What factors can affect the fit of a PFR?

**Facial Hair** – It is important not to compromise the seal between the PFR and the skin of the face. Facial hair present between the edges of the PFR mask and the skin of the face must be removed. Beards, large moustaches, sideburns and short stubble can interfere with the seal of the mask and its ability to provide protection. People must not have facial hair on the cheeks, jaw and neck to ensure an adequate seal. Any facial hair must be maintained as per the time of Fit Testing

- Facial changes due to significant weight gain or loss,
  - o facial surgery
  - o facial scars,
  - o dentures
- Eyewear, both prescription and protective eye wear. Eye wear must be worn in the same way as per time of Fit testing.
- Jewellery, including earrings and nose piercings

### How do I perform a PFR Fit Check?

A PFR fit check includes both positive and negative pressure facial seal checks and is performed, **every time a PFR is used**. The fit tested PFR must be taken off (donned), fit checked and taken off (doffed) as per the manufacturer's instructions for use and in the way the



training provided by the fit testing administrator. Staff must always perform hand hygiene before putting on a respirator and performing a fit check.

### PFR Types:

#### 1. Duck bill and Flat Fold Style PFRs

- a) Check the positive pressure seal of the PFR by exhaling. If the seal is adequate the PFR should bulge slightly when the person exhales. If air escapes between the face and the PFR, there is NOT an adequate facial seal. Readjust the PFR and repeat the fit check process.
- b) Check the negative pressure seal of the PFR by inhaling. The PFR should collapse slightly when the person inhales. If the PFR is not drawn in towards the face or air leaks, there is NOT a good facial seal. Readjust the PFR and repeat the fit check process.

#### 2. Moulded and/or Cup style PFRs

Place one or both hands completely over the PFR. Inhale and exhale sharply. Be careful not to disturb the position of the PFR. If air leaks around the nose or around PFR edges, re-adjust and make sure the nose piece and PFR edges fit snugly.

**No clinical or care activity** should be undertaken until a satisfactory facial seal has been achieved. If the staff member has not achieved a successful facial seal as instructed above it is important that they seek advice from the Fit Test Program Administrator for assistance.

### Tips for achieving a good fit of a PFR

- Use a mirror whilst adjusting the PFR.
- Ask someone to look for hair or earrings that might be caught in the seal. Make sure the headbands are positioned properly, as per the person's fit test.

### When do I need to be re fit tested?

- When there is a significant change in their facial characteristics that could alter the facial seal of the PFR (e.g. facial surgery or significant change in body weight)
- When failing to demonstrate a proper fit check at competency assessment (minimum annually)

### References

- [Australian/New Zealand Standard: AS/NZS 1715-2009: Selection, use and maintenance of respiratory protective equipment](#)
- [SA Health Clinical Guideline Respiratory Protection against Airborne Infectious Diseases Guideline](#)
- SA Health [Policy Guideline: Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) Selection](#)

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#### Office Use only:

Your Facility Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Fit Test: \_\_\_\_\_

Fit Test Operator Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Your mask size and type is: \_\_\_\_\_

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For more information

Department for health and Wellbeing

Workforce Health

Level 7, CitiCentre Building

Hindmarsh Square

Telephone: 08 82266860

[www.sahealth.sa.gov.au](http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au)

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