

Hello all and welcome to this brief update piece from the Fit2Fit scheme, which exists as we know, to improve the respiratory health of those wearing tight-fitting Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE) through the running and the maintaining of the accreditation programme and the promotion to the market of the virtue and benefits of using competent face fitting providers.

This communication to the accredited community, highlights some helpful learnings/reminders which the Fit2Fit Assessors have witnessed in recent times and I hope you find this newsletter of interest.

But before highlighting some of the “pointers” I am taking the opportunity to share some other information.

As many of you are aware outside of the UK, RPE face fitting is not a universal regulatory requirement. However, that is beginning to change with face fitting now a demanded by regulation in Italy and Sweden with more countries in Europe likely to follow. The Fit2Fit Qualification is now run by the Nordic Safety Association and the Italian Association, Assosistema. Fit2Fit is also run in Finland through STYL and in Belgium and in Luxembourg by Febelsafe. The good practice in the UK is being promoted into Europe through the bodies above and through our friends in ESF and indeed through ISRP. Working with HSE we have also just produced and published a video using the FFRED demonstrator unit. This will be widely promoted across industry to raise awareness of the need for competent face fitting and the benefit of using qualified face fitters. The video can play a useful role in any training that you provide, so please use it and do promote the video through your own channels. It can be accessed through the link below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kLBapsU4p8w&t=2s>

FIT TESTING

January 2025

During Fit2Fit practical assessments we observe a range of steps in the delivery of a fit test that are not addressed to the depth required for the delivery of a competent fit test. Below are reminders covering the most common elements that are often missed. It is important that these steps are carried out, **not only** in Fit2Fit assessments, but for **all fit tests**.

1. TEST EXERCISES

A) Inhalation during the head movement exercises

During wearer briefing it is important that the test exercises are explained including explaining when the wearer should inhale during the exercise. The purpose of this step is to test the fit at the extreme of head movements.

Extract from HSE INDG479

Turning head side to side	The wearer should slowly turn their head from side to side between the extreme positions on each side (approximately 15–20 times per minute). The head shall be held at each extreme momentarily so the wearer can inhale at each side.
Moving head up and down	The wearer should slowly move their head up and down (approximately 15–20 times per minute). The wearer should be instructed to inhale in the up position (i.e. when looking toward the ceiling)

B) Continuous flow of the test exercises

The exercises protocol is designed to be a continuous process without any breaks or pauses between the exercises. The wearer should continuously perform the exercise steps for the full duration which includes, for the APC method, the mask purge, the mask sample, the ambient sample and the ambient purge times. The risk of instructing the wearer to take a pause between the exercise steps is that the wearer may not be fully performing the next exercise step at the point the mask sample begins again.

Please also note the footnote under Table 3 at H76, and the guidance given at F10 and F21 in the BSIF Companion for the ambient particle counting method.

2. OTHER PPE

Other common omissions include failing to ask the wearer about the use of additional head-worn PPE, not ensuring that the other PPE is worn during the fit test even if it is mentioned, and not recording the make and model of the additional PPE. According to HSE INDG479, the fit test report must clearly document the make and model of any PPE or RPE accessory worn during the test.

3. FACEPIECE PROBING & FIT TEST ADAPTORS

Facepieces should be probed such that the air sample withdrawn from the facepiece is representative of the air breathed by the wearer. HSE INDG479 specifies that the open end of the sampling tube be positioned in the wearer's breathing zone, **close to the face and approximately mid-way between the nose and mouth.**

It is also important that the sample probe and tube are free from kinks or blockages that may reduce the sample flow thus potentially leading to a false fit test result. Fit testers should be able to demonstrate how they check this and validate a fit test result.

It is good practice to get into the habit of checking the condition of the fit test adaptor before fitting it to the facepiece. Some designs have an inhalation valve that should be checked for damage and some designs include sample tubing that should be checked for kinks, blockages and leak tightness.

Additionally, overtime manufacturers of fit test adaptors may redesign their adaptor(s) to improve fitting capability and sample location. It is therefore worth checking that you are using the latest design of fit test adaptor for the facepiece being fit tested.

4. NEBULIZERS & FILL VOLUME

Fully functioning nebulizers are essential when conducting a QLFT. Having knowledge of how the nebulizer works will help to carry out troubleshooting. We often witness fit testers not fully checking the two small holes in the nebulizer.

It is also important to have sufficient volume of Sensitivity and Fit Test solution in the nebulizers throughout the fit test. Only using a minimum volume greatly increases the risk that a full spray will not be created which may invalidate a fit test. HSE advise and recommend, in line with BS ISO 16975-3, that approximately 3ml of testing solutions be used. (Note: a full 2.5ml vial is acceptable).

The BSIF Companions provide essential up-to-date guidance in support of HSE INDG479 and we recommend that fit testers frequently check that they are familiar with the latest versions. [Resources - fit2fit](#)

FURTHER GENERAL REMINDERS ON FIT TESTING AND RPE USE

CLEAN SHAVEN & TIGHT-FITTING FACEPIECES

HSE guidance (HSG53 and INDG479) is very clear that tight-fitting facepieces, i.e. those certified to EN 136, EN140, EN149 and EN12942 (the latter of which carries an additional European classification of "TM") should only be worn by wearers who are clean shaven in the region of the face seal. Note that the face seal region is the full width of the face seal, and so any hair that encroaches on the face seal region is not acceptable.