



Respirator Fit Testing – OSHA and L&I allow for “Just In Time” fit testing.

With the surge in employees needing to wear protective face pieces, or N95 respirators, it is still vitally important to follow the interim guidelines approved by both Washington State Labor and Industries and OSHA.

With the interim rules, employees that are being required to wear a respirator or face piece in response to the COVID-19 response will still need to pass an initial fit test, but this test can now be done using non-destructive methods and a Qualitative testing protocol.

Other Good Faith efforts require hospitals to

- Inform employees that the hospital is suspending annual fit testing for N95 respirators,
- Educate employees on the importance of a proper seal at each donning,
- Visual Inspection of the respirator
- Remind workers to inform their supervisor, HR, employee health nurse, or respiratory program administrator if they feel the integrity and/or fit of the respiratory protection device has been compromised.

Fit tests must be documented, and employees that regularly wear respiratory protection will need their annual fit test once OSHA withdraws the waiver, so please ensure employees getting fit tested as part of the response are differentiated from your normal group.

Remember the recordkeeping for Medical Surveillance and fit testing are not the same. Medical questionnaires need to be kept for 30 years, plus employment, but the fit test record needs only to be kept for a year, or until the next fit test. Both fit testing and medical surveillance/questionnaires need to be done annually.

Contact:

Eric Gutzwiler, OHST
Safety Program Coordinator
Washington Hospital Services
ericg@wsha.org or 509.741.7561.