

## Appendix 1: Information for the Facepiece Wearer

(Adapted from Fit Testing of Respiratory Protective Equipment Facepieces, Operational Circular OC 282/28, HSE (2012))

### **What is a fit-test?**

The trained fit-tester carrying out the fit-test will explain to you what a fit-test is and why it is carried out.

### **What will be required from me when I have a fit-test?**

You will be asked not to eat, drink (except plain water), smoke, vape, or chew gum for at least 30 minutes before the fit-test.

A fit-test should not be conducted if you have any facial hair growth in the area where the facepiece seal meets your face. This is because a reliable face seal can only be achieved if you are clean-shaven in the area where the facepiece seal touches your face. You will therefore be asked to be suitably clean-shaven for the fit-test. The clean shave must be a wet shave with a razor, performed no more than 8 hours prior to the fit test.

***You should remember that the same clean-shaven rules applies when you wear your facepiece on a day-to-day basis at work, not just for the face-fit test.***

If you are unable to be suitably clean-shaven for an unavoidable reason (e.g. where a beard is worn for religious reasons), then your employer should provide you with a suitable loose fitting facepiece that does not require you to be clean-shaven or make alternative arrangements so that the risk to your health is either prevented or adequately controlled. Care should be taken to ensure that any facial hair within the facepiece does not interfere with the proper functioning of the facepiece components such as exhalations valves. Loose-fitting facepieces do not require the fit testing described in this document. The Health Board uses Powered Air Purifying Respirator (PAPR) systems for their loose-fitting facepiece requirements. Please note that PAPR users still require training in their correct use.

You should be able to fit the facepiece in the manner in which you have been trained, and without assistance from the fit tester. You should know how to carry out a pre-use fit check of the facepiece.

During the fit test you will be asked to perform simple exercises. The person conducting the fit test should explain the reasons for carrying out these exercises. If you have any medical condition that may prevent you from performing these

exercises, then you should bring this to the attention of the fit-tester and your employer.

If you normally wear protective goggles or hard hat, etc when you wear your facepiece you may be asked to wear these also during the fit test.

If you are required to wear a tight-fitting full-face mask, please seek guidance from the Health, Safety and Security Departments as these masks cannot be fit-tested using the qualitative method outlined in this Procedure. They must be fit-tested using the alternative quantitative method that must be undertaken by an external provider.

### **Can I be fit-tested in the facepiece I usually wear?**

The fit-test will be carried out using the facepiece you normally wear or one identical to it. If you are to be fit-tested in your own facepiece then you or your employer should make sure that the facepiece is clean and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instruction. *Note:* It is not the job of the fit-test provider. They have been advised by HSE not to carry out a fit testing on a facepiece that is not maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

### **What if I normally wear more than one type of respirator?**

If you need to wear more than one type of tight-fitting facepiece for your job, e.g. a filtering facepiece and a full-face mask respirator, then you should be fit tested for each type of facepiece.

### **What will I be told at the end of the fit-test?**

When you have completed the fit-test you will be told if you have obtained a pass or a fail. A pass means that the facepiece is suitable for you. You or your employer will be issued with a fit-test report, which should be retained. If you have not been given a copy of the report, you can ask for a copy from your employer. A failed fit-test may indicate that the facepiece does not fit you properly.

### **What will happen if I fail a fit-test?**

The fit-tester should ask you to re-fit the facepiece and repeat the fit-test. If a better fit is not obtained you may be asked to try on a different size or type of facepiece and repeat the fit-test.

***You should not use a facepiece that does not fit you properly.***

The fit-tester should inform your employer. Your employer should ensure that you are provided with a facepiece that fits you properly.

Powered air hoods are available for staff unable to taste both bitter or sweet solutions, or for staff that are unable to shave due to religious reasons. Certain powered air hoods fitted with a large head-top may accommodate religious head coverings and may be more secure than wearing an FFP3 mask.

Note: **Powered air hoods need additional training – please consult the HS&S Department.**

### **How often should I have a fit-test?**

If you need to change to another type of facepiece; you lose or gain weight; undergo any substantial dental work or develop facial imperfections (scars, moles, etc) around the face seal area. Additionally you should be re-tested upon return from maternity leave. Your employer may also have a policy that you have a fit test every year or two years for example.

### **Will I be able to move employment without having to have another fit-test?**

If you change your employer but still continue to wear the same facepiece or same facepiece model and size you should not have to be re-tested, your new employer, however, may wish for you to have another fit test.

### **Who should pay for the fit-test?**

Your employer is responsible for your health and safety whilst at work and therefore they are responsible for the cost of the fit-test.