

Just the Facts...

Respirator Fit Testing: Qualifications and Training

QUALIFICATIONS –

What are the requirements for people who conduct respirator fit testing? Certification is not required. The American National Standards Institute (ANSI), The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and Army Regulations (AR) describe specific qualifications. Each is slightly different; however they all require that fit testers are knowledgeable in all aspects of the fit testing process either through training or hands-on demonstration.

ANSI/AIHA Z88.10-2001 – The standard states that personnel shall be “properly trained” and demonstrate a proficiency in the fit test methods being used. The respiratory program administrator is responsible for evaluating the qualifications and training of those personnel. Specific qualifications:

1. Be familiar with Z88.10 (fit test methods) and Z88.2 (respiratory protection).
2. Demonstrate general knowledge of respiratory face pieces.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of operation & practical aspects of fit test methods.
4. Demonstrate the ability to set up applicable equipment for the fit test method(s) used.
5. Demonstrate the ability to conduct the respirator fit test(s) used.

OSHA 1910.134 Respiratory Protection – Since qualitative and quantitative fit testing procedures are different OSHA has specific requirements for each. The employer shall ensure that the person performing the testing is able to:

Quantitative Fit Test (QNFT)

1. Calibrate equipment.
2. Perform tests properly.
3. Recognize an invalid test.
4. Calculate fit factors properly.
5. Ensure equipment is in working order.

Qualitative Fit Test (QLFT)

1. Prepare test solutions.
2. Calibrate equipment.
3. Perform tests properly.
4. Recognize an invalid test.
5. Ensure equipment is in working order.

AR 11-34 Respiratory Protection Program – specifies that the Installation Respirator Specialist will be instructed in the following:

1. Handling, use and maintenance of the respirators.
2. Respiratory selection.
3. Records management.
4. Medical and safety aspects of the program.
5. Fitting and testing of fitted respirators.

The Installation Medical Authority is responsible for providing training and guidance to the Installation Respirator Specialist.

TRAINING –

Who provides the training? This is usually accomplished in one of two ways. First, the Installation Respirator Specialists, Safety Specialists, and or Industrial Hygienists can perform the training. Another option is to have the respirator manufacturer or safety equipment supply vendor perform the training. Most manufacturers will come to your location to help with fit testing. They can usually provide train-the-trainer training. This type of training has the advantage of being able to fit test large groups in less time. To arrange for manufacturer assistance contact the company you purchase your respirators from.

MANUFACTURERS –

The following are websites for some of the more common respirator manufacturers.

MSA – www.msanet.com

3M – www.3Mrespirators.com

NORTH – www.northsafety.com

SURVIVAIR – www.survivair.com

AOSAFETY – www.aosafety.com

MOLDEX – www.moldexgov.com