

Preparedness Plan for Fit Testing Brisdoc Workforce SOP

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Introduction

Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE) filter the air to remove harmful substances during the act of breathing to provide clean air for the individual and is part of Health and Safety legislation. RPE is necessary protection for air borne transmission diseases and Brisdoc has a Notifiable and High Consequence Infectious Disease Operational PPE and Cleaning SOP. This is currently operational and as part of RPE, a Respiratory Hood System is used.

This SOP is a preparedness plan in the eventuality of a pandemic where there is a need for a larger number of the Brisdoc workforce to use RPE at the same time. This SOP explains how to wear a filtered face piece (FFP), how to fit test FFP and how Brisdoc intends to keep the trained Fit testers competent in the eventuality of implementing this SOP.

The standard masks to be fitted in a clinical setting are called FFP3, the number '3' is an indication of the filtration size of the particles the mask will be effective in filtering air in a high risk, health care setting.

FFP3 masks need to fit each wearers face by achieving good contact between a wearer's skin in the facial area and the face seal of the RPE. It is this testing of the fit that is called fit testing.

Related Policies and Documentation

This SOP is to be read in conjunction with the [Infection Prevention Policy](#) (2024) and [the Notifiable and High Consequence Infectious Disease Operational PPE and Cleaning SOP](#) (2024) for Brisdoc

Other useful resources this SOP is based on are:

Health and Safety Executive (2019) [Guidance on Respiratory Protective Equipment Fit Testing](#)

Health and Safety Executive [Fit Testing Basics](#)

Definitions

Qualitative Fit Testing – a pass or fail test that is based on the mask wearers subjective assessment of any leakage through the fitted mask and face seal by detecting a taste sensation of bitter thorough the use of an aerosol tester.

Fit Tester – the trained person performing the fit test

Testee – the individual being fit tested for FFP3 mask

Role and Responsibilities

Fit Tester

All Brisdoc Fit Testers have a duty under the Health and Safety at Work legislation to ensure they are up to date with current guidance regarding fit testing of FFP3 in primary and urgent care environment. A Fit Tester is deemed competent if they have completed training from an accredited fit test provider and then has a subsequent refresher from an accredited trainer two yearly. A six-monthly internal refresher will be held within Brisdoc to ensure testers are

competent and confident in the process. Please follow instructions and document findings on Appendix 1.

Designated Fit Testers are expected to be competent in this process and should liaise with the IPC (Infection Prevention Control) Lead if they have any concerns regarding fit testing. In the eventuality of fit testing the workforce, all enquiries regarding fit testing must be discussed with the IPC Lead.

Co-Owners

All co-owners must only wear FFP3 masks if they have had a successful fit test for that specific make and model of RPE. The wearing of FFP3 is currently not in use in Brisdoc. If individuals have their own FFP3 masks that are correctly fit tested, then these can be worn if there is a need.

Co-owners will be made aware of the Preparedness Plan if it is implemented and instructed on next steps.

Co-owners can refer to the IPC Policy for further information on Infection Prevention Control (IPC) and RPE use.

IPC Lead

The IPC Lead is responsible for the implementation and management of the Preparedness Plan. This will include ensuring there is an adequate number of Fit Testers across Brisdoc Services to implement the Preparedness Plan if necessary. It will also be necessary to ensure Fit Testers across Brisdoc are aware of the need to remain competent and to organise training as appropriate.

As part of the Preparedness Plan, the IPC Lead will ensure there is a system to record and distribute Fit test reports to co-owners and managers as required. The reports must be available for 5 years post-test.

The IPC Lead will ensure safety of all co-owners, seeking appropriate medical assessment if there are concerns during the fit test process or wearing RPE in the eventuality of a pandemic.

Facilities Manager

The Facilities Manager will liaise with the IPC Lead to ensure the preparedness SOP is viable and training is planned at the specified times for the Fit Tester competence and confidence.

This includes training and equipment.

The Fit Test Process

Before the Fit Test

In the eventuality of the Preparedness Plan being activated, ensure all testees are sent information signposting to the IPC policy including how to wear an FFP3 mask and an explanation of the fit test process. Clear advice on restrictions of eating and drinking must be given in advance as well as guidance on facial hair, piercing and glasses. Advance notice of

allergies must be gained from each testee and all testees must be given information about the bitter taste aerosol used in the fit test and potential allergies.

If in doubt discuss with the IPC lead. The fit testing process can be viewed as a potential claustrophobic period, wearing a hood. It is also a physically active process. Please discuss this with the Testee and IPC Lead as a risk assessment may need to be completed.

Furthermore, wearing FFP3 for long periods of time in work can be a physically demanding, if this is required and there are concerns, please discuss with IPC Lead.

Ensure there is a booking process and ensure that all testees have a time slot of an hour (additional if a re-test is required).

Consideration for Testers during fit testing

Testers must run through the fit test process for each testee.

The Fit Tester must check for allergies and check the aerosol spray used as part of the process.

The Fit Tester must explain that RPE can be constraining and the on-going use of FFP3 masks can lead to feelings of claustrophobia. Furthermore, the testing process with a hood is an activity-based process. Please discuss this with the IPC Lead and defer the test if there are concerns regarding medical fitness.

The Fit Tester must train the testee on correct donning of the mask before the fit test as well as ensuring optimum fit through positioning, particularly the nose seals and setting the strap tension to determine an acceptable fit. See Appendix 2

Ensure the equipment is functioning, particularly the nebuliser as it is prone to clogging. Regular cleaning will prevent this but in the event of clogging during a test, the test will be deemed invalid.

The Fit Tester will be observing and caring for the testee during the fit process.

Considerations for Testees during fit testing

Testees must not eat or drink (except still water), smoke or chew gum at least 30minutes before the test.

A fit test will not be performed if there is any facial hair between the testees skin and the face piece sealing surface. Once tested and successful, the FFP3 mask allocated will only be therapeutic if used in this manner with no further facial hair in the specified area.

Any change to the face shape, piercings may affect the future use of the FFP3 in terms of appropriate fit.

A successful fit test

A pass in a qualitative fit test is when the testee does not taste a bitter taste at any time during any of the test exercises.

Please ensure that palate and lips are cleansed before the fit test and after the sensitivity test.

Before the test is carried out a sensitivity test is performed. If the testee cannot detect the taste test aerosol (bitter) then a different agent needs to be used. This can be discussed with the IPC Lead.

The fit testing process must be a continuous test and done on the same day, in one sitting.

Repeat fit test

Fit tests are valid for 2 years but sometimes it may be necessary to repeat fit tests if the mask that has been tested has changed in terms of size, make or model or is unavailable. Furthermore, the testee may have had a change of facial shape, dental work or piercings which may require a retest.

Version Control

| Date | Version | Author | Change Details |
|------|---------|--------|----------------|
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Appendix 1 – How to do a Fit Test Documentation

Qualitative Fit test

Please keep a copy for Brisdoc records and give one to the individual tested. This test is valid for 2 years with exception of changes in face shapes. Please stand for the whole test.

| | | | | | |
|--------------------|--|--------------------|--|-----------------|--|
| Date Tested | | Retest Date | | Location | |
|--------------------|--|--------------------|--|-----------------|--|

| Personal Details | Bitrex | Saccharin | PPE Details |
|--|--------|-----------|-------------|
| Name | | | PPE worn |
| ID | | | |
| No facial hair / clean shaven | | | PPE Make |
| Medically fit for fit testing - activities | | | |
| Medically fit to wear a mask | | | PPE Model |
| Not smoked or eaten for 30mins | | | |
| Allergies / Claustrophobia/ wearing mask/ | | | |

| Mask Details | RPE pre-checks |
|--------------|---|
| Mask Make | Visual inspection- hold up to light |
| Mask Model | Donning |
| Mask Size | Pre-use fit check |
| | Cover mask and breath in - -ve pressure |
| | Check fit with glasses |

The sensitivity test
 Use nebulizer A and solution A (sensitivity)
 Check function of nebulizer, bungs removed, wearer breathing through mouth tongue slightly out

| | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Up to 10 squeezes | Up to 20 squeezes | Up to 30 squeezes |
| Clean mouth, palate and lips with water | | |

The fit test
 Use Nebulizer B and Solution B (Fit Test). Don mask and check fit – check nose area and remould nose piece, negative pressure check
Check palate and lips are clean by sipping water, function of nebulizers, both bungs removed, wearer breathing through mouth with tongue slightly out

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| Use 10 initial squeezes, start stop watch and then 5 squeezes every 30 seconds | Use 20 initial squeezes, start stop watch and then 10 squeezes every 30 seconds | Use 30 initial squeezes, start stop watch and then 15 squeezes every 30 seconds |
|---|--|--|

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|---|
| Normal breathing 60 seconds | Pass/fail | Procedure if Fit test fails 1. Remove hood 2. Examine fit on mask on face 3. Remove and inspect mask 4. Advise to drink water and clean palate and lips/ wipe face 5. Wait 30mins -no smoking / food 6. Conduct new sensitivity test |
| Deep breathing 60 seconds | Pass/fail | |
| Head side to side 60 seconds | Pass/fail | |
| Head up and down 60 seconds | Pass/fail | |
| Counting 100 backwards 60 seconds | Pass/fail | |
| Bending 60 seconds | Pass/fail | |
| Normal breathing 60 seconds | Pass/fail | |

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|-------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------|
| Overall Pass | Pass/fail | 7. New fit test with new mask |
| Reveal test | Pass/fail | 8. Re-test same make & model & size |
| User Print & Sign | | |
| Fit Tester Print & Sign | | |

Appendix 2 How to don a FFP3 mask and check fit



Public Health
England



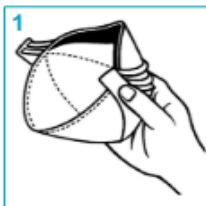
How to put on and fit check an **FFP3 respirator**

Key facts

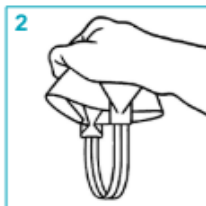
- FFP3 respirators are designed to protect the wearer from breathing in small airborne particles which might contain viruses.
- They should be worn when carrying out potentially infectious aerosol-generating procedures on patients with symptoms of a viral respiratory infection, or where a patient is known/suspected to have an infection spread via the aerosol route or when caring for patients known/suspected to be infected with a newly identified respiratory virus.
- FFP3 respirators are available in different sizes and designs, use only the model and size which a fit test has shown is correct for the wearer.
- The respirator images shown below are for illustrative purposes only. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions.

Follow these five steps to fit your respirator correctly

Tip: It may be helpful to look in the mirror when fitting your respirator



1 Hold the respirator in one hand and separate the edges to fully open it with the other hand. Bend the nose wire (where present) at the top of the respirator to form a gentle curve.



2 Turn the respirator upside down to expose the two headbands, and then separate them using your index finger and thumb. Hold the headbands with your index finger and thumb and cup the respirator under your chin.



3 Position the upper headband on the crown of your head, above the ears, not over them. Position the lower strap at the back of your head below your ears.

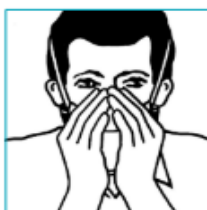


4 Ensure that the respirator is flat against your cheeks.



5 Mould the nosepiece across the bridge of your nose by firmly pressing down with your fingers until you have a good facial fit, if a good fit cannot be achieved, do not proceed.

Now perform a fit check



Cover the front of the respirator with both hands, being careful not to disturb the position of the respirator on the face.

For an unvalved product – exhale sharply; for a valved product – inhale sharply.

If air flows around the nose, readjust the nosepiece; if air flows around the edges of the respirator, readjust the headbands.

A successful fit check is when there is no air leaking from the edges of the respirator. Always perform a fit check before entering the work area.

If a successful fit check cannot be achieved, remove and refit the respirator.

If you still cannot obtain a successful fit check, do not enter the work area.

These images are for illustrative purposes only. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions.

Remember

- Respirators must be used with other necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gowns, gloves and compatible eye protection.
- Respirators should be discarded after each use.
- Respirators should be disposed of as healthcare waste.
- Hand hygiene must always be performed following removal and disposal of PPE.
- The fit check is not a substitute for fit testing

Fit testing should be carried out by a properly trained competent fit tester.

Other guidance is available on bacterial infections and pulmonary tuberculosis.

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