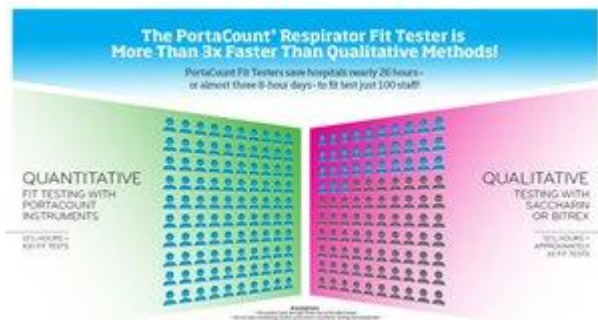


COVID-19 PREPAREDNESS: HOW TO SAVE TIME FIT TESTING HOSPITAL STAFF AND MEDICAL TEAMS

The coronavirus outbreak is highlighting the need for faster fit testing for healthcare staff



Staff who must wear respirators for work are already required to be fit tested annually. However, during public health emergencies like the COVID-19 outbreak, it may be necessary to fit test more staff than usual. In some cases, those already fit tested may need additional testing to assess new masks or different respirator types.

Fit testing large groups can take a lot of time, but there are tools and techniques to streamline the process.

A SINGLE QUALITATIVE FIT TEST CAN RUN 23 MINUTES OR MORE

Many healthcare facilities use manual, time-consuming qualitative fit tests that use Saccharin or Bitrex as the challenge agent. According to OSHA, those methods take 7 minutes for the seven-step protocol. Additional steps like threshold testing, a mandatory wear-off period, and an OSHA required comfort assessment period add even more time, totaling 23 minutes or more per test.

A fit test using a PortaCount Respirator Fit Tester finishes in less than 2 ½ minutes for any respirator, including any N95 mask. Adding the pre-test 5-minute comfort assessment, users can complete a fit test in 7 ½ minutes.

DOING THE MATH

We wanted to learn how this difference in fit testing time could affect hospitals that now face large-scale crisis scenarios around the world. The comparison was dramatic.

Qualitative Fit Testing with Saccharin or Bitrex for 100 staff with N95s

- At approximately 23 minutes per test, which includes:
 - 1–3 minutes (approx.) - Threshold Screening Test
 - 10 minutes – Threshold test wear-off time
 - 5 minutes – Comfort assessment
 - 7 minutes – One OSHA compliant fit test
- **TOTAL FIT TEST TIME = 38.33 HOURS**

Quantitative Fit Testing with PortaCount Respirator Fit Testers for 100 staff with N95s

- At approximately 7.5 minutes per test, which includes:
 - 5 minutes – Comfort assessment
 - 2.5 minutes - One OSHA compliant fit test
- **TOTAL FIT TEST TIME = 12.50 HOURS**

PortaCount Fit Testers save hospitals nearly 26 hours—or almost three 8-hour days—to fit test just 100 staff. Imagine the saved time for those fit testing hundreds or thousands of hospital staff.

HOW PORTACOUNT FIT TESTING SAVES TIME AND IMPROVES EFFICIENCY IN YOUR FACILITY

Anyone who uses qualitative methods knows that test time is only a fraction of the total time needed to complete a fit test. Threshold testing, mask selection, test failures, and manual record keeping can quickly add up to many additional hours.

With PortaCount Respirator Fit Testers, there is no threshold testing. Mask selection and training is faster due to easy animated instructions and real-time data capture. Automated recording and reporting cuts down on administrative time.

THE BENEFITS OF FIT TESTING MORE PEOPLE IN LESS TIME

Respiratory protection preparedness is important for every hospital, whether it's a public health emergency or daily infection prevention and control. With PortaCount, your team can:

- Increase throughput to reduce fit testing time required by staff
- Achieve higher pass rates for fit tests due to improved training and mask selection
- Provide consistent, quality fit tests every time to every staff member
- Lower operational resource requirements to administer your fit testing program with fewer fit test administrator hours
- Maintain a more focused and economically efficient respirator inventory by scaling back respirators that are proven with data to fit fewer people
- Improve respirator fit for your staff, and by extension the protection they receive from those respirators

If your hospital or healthcare facility is ready to achieve greater efficiencies with quantitative fit testing, contact TSI today.

More resources:

- [Learn more about PortaCount and OSHA Respiratory Protection Standard protocols](#)
- [Learn why Safety Managers, Nurse Practitioners, Paramedics, and other healthcare professionals prefer PortaCount](#)
- [Learn why Quantitative Respirator Fit Testing beats Qualitative](#)

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