



Frequently Asked Questions

Respiratory Protection Program

These FAQs are designed to answer some of the questions you may have regarding the RPP.

What is the Respiratory Protection Program?

The Monash Health Respiratory Protection Program (RPP) combines a comprehensive suite of respiratory protection processes to protect Monash Health employees from workplace respiratory hazards including airborne infectious agents, dust and other particles.

What is fit testing?

Fit testing will see you trial a range of makes, models and sizes of close-fitting filtering face respirators/masks or RPE to find the most efficient seal for your face measured by a quantitative fit-testing equipment and a trained operator.

How is fit testing performed?

Monash Health has acquired several fit-testing machines which perform quantitative fit testing, measuring the amount of face seal leakage present when a given mask is worn.

You will be tested for a minimum of five different mask types, with an aspiration of identifying two or more masks which achieve an effective seal.

How long will it take to be fit tested?

We estimate that it will take around an hour to undertake a fit test.

Why do we need fit testing?

The effectiveness of close-fitting respiratory protection relies on achieving an effective seal against the wearer's face.

The purpose of fit testing is to verify which selected makes, models and sizes of close-fitting RPE best fits the wearer.

Ten different face masks are available, with testing of five masks to be completed on each participant.

When will fit testing take place?

Fit testing will begin from December 2020 and we expect up to 8,000 employees to be fit tested by June 2021.

You will be notified via email and your manager when fit testing is available for you.

Conducting fit testing requires specific equipment and training, which means we cannot fit test everyone at once. To best manage the program, the first people to be fit tested are those at the greatest risk of exposure to respiratory hazards, as agreed by the Chief Medical Officer.



What do I need to prepare for my fit test?

Employees need to allow an hour to complete the fit test process. During that time, each employee will be tested for a minimum of five mask types.

Prior to your appointment, you will need to:

- Bring any PPE (e.g. eye wear, headwear, etc.) that you would normally wear in conjunction with your mask/respirator, as this should be worn when being fit tested.
- Be clean shaven on the day of the fit test, and where using any tight-fitting mask/respirator.
- Ensure you arrive with hair tied back and away from the mask/respirator face area.
- Do not smoke or eat in the 30 minutes prior to the fit test as this may affect results.
- Prior to being able to book your fit test, you will be required to complete an online consent and medical clearance.

If you have any condition which you believe may prohibit you from conducting a fit test, please discuss it with your manager prior to completing the consent form. We would still like you to complete the consent form, and somebody from the RPP team will be in touch if you have any further queries.

Will I be required to shave my facial hair?

Facial hair which is present along any part of the RPE seal, even stubble, does interfere with the seal and will therefore offer less protection. For those who are able, and require fit tested RPE, you will be required to be clean shaven.

We acknowledge and understand that our employees may have facial hair for religious and cultural reasons and we ask you please raise these reasons in your consent prior to booking. Rest assured; we will work with you to find an alternative solution.

What if I have a skin or respiratory condition?

If you have any condition which you believe may prohibit you from conducting a fit test, please discuss it with your manager prior to completing the consent form. We still ask you complete the consent form, and somebody from the RPP team will be in touch to discuss options.

If you use a skincare solution or protection normally, you will be fit tested using these and are required to bring these to a fit test. This allows for a clearer result when determining whether an acceptably safe seal can be achieved with RPE.

Rest assured; if a safe seal cannot be achieved with RPE, we will work with you to find an alternative solution.

If you have any further questions, please contact RPPenquiries@monashhealth.org or call 9594 5815.

How frequent is fit testing?

Fit testing is an annual requirement for employees.

It will also be required where a person's face profile has changed e.g. from weight loss or gain.

Fit checks are always required every time a mask/respiratory is applied, to ensure a good seal. Where a fit check determines the lack in a good seal, a repeat fit test will be required.



What happens after the fit test is completed?

The fit test will determine which RPE makes and models best fit and protect you. You will receive a card with your fit testing results. You will be required to wear the RPE selected for you during the fit test.

We will use the information from fit testing to ensure supply of RPE within Monash Health. Your manager will also be advised and will endeavour to ensure an appropriate supply at your work location.

We are also required to provide all results to the Department of Health and Human Services. They use this information to manage Victoria's supply of PPE.

How do I book a test?

This intranet page contains a link below to click on and complete the fit test consent and medical clearance form. On completion of this form, you will then be directed to click on a booking link to book into a fit test session.

It is intended that where possible, all employees will undertake the test during rostered work time. You will be paid during this time. Please discuss the timing with your manager.

Where do I go to for my fit test?

Fit testing will be performed at a number of locations across Monash Health.

Currently fit testing is operating at 20 Wright Street Clayton (opposite Monash Medical Centre), Casey Hospital Ward D, Dandenong Hospital, Moorabbin Hospital, and Kingston Centre. Fit Testing has been completed at Chestnut Gardens Aged Care Home.

Will a tighter seal mean more uncomfortable RPE?

The comfort of masks will range from person to person, but a more secure seal through fit testing will offer you the best protection from respiratory hazards.

In general terms, a poor fitting mask may be more comfortable, however it won't be as effective in providing the protection it is designed to. Even with a fit-test it is still important to conduct a fit check every time you use RPE.

Will fit testing work over my head covering/scarf?

A covering which interferes with any part of the RPE seal will impact the RPE's effectiveness and will therefore offer less protection.

We acknowledge and understand that our employees may wear head coverings for religious and cultural reasons.

These head coverings have been able to fold back and achieve a successful fit test outcome. If there is any concern in altering head coverings to achieve this, please contact the RPP team via email:

RPPenquiries@monashhealth.org

We will work with you to find a solution if a safe seal cannot be achieved.



Who are the priority health care workers for fit testing?

The first people to be fit tested will be those at the greatest risk of exposure to respiratory hazards.

We are currently developing the priority framework to ensure those health care workers who perform their roles in higher risk areas are prioritised to be fit tested in the RPP.

The priority framework will be informed by evidence, from Monash Health and broader health care sector, to determine who are the highest priority fit testing cohorts.

What happens if I feel like my mask does not fit?

Please discuss with your line manager and contact the RPP team.

You may be required to be fit tested again.

Fit checking process must be completed every time you use RPE, even after you have been fit tested, to ensure your RPE creates an adequate seal.

If you or another person conducting a fit check believes that the RPE isn't creating an adequate seal and therefore putting you at greater risk, you will be re fit tested.

Will there still be fit checks after fit testing?

Yes, fit checks will continue.

Fit checks are really important in identifying if your RPE isn't creating an adequate seal and therefore putting you at greater risk.

If you find the RPE isn't creating an adequate seal, you should discuss this with your line manager and contact the RPP team.

You may require to be fit tested again.

Who will perform the fit testing?

Monash Health has recruited fit testing operators who have trained to use the specific quantitative fit testing machines.

It's important the operators have the expertise to ensure the results of the testing are highly accurate and can be trusted, ensuring the selected RPE best protects your health and safety.

What kind of RPE will be fit tested?

All RPE is designed to filter particles that can enter your respiratory system. Currently, we are fit testing N95 and P2 close-fitting respirators.

What happens if there is another large outbreak, is there a way to fast-track this program of fit testing?

Yes, this is referred to as 'Just-In-Time' fit testing.

In the event of large or localised outbreak, it may be necessary to fit test a significant number of Monash Health employees quickly.



'Just-in-time' fit testing involves an experienced fit test operator providing training for up to 5 people simultaneously to be fit test operators.

Those newly trained operators can then conduct fit testing for more workers.

However, it's important to stress that just-in-time fit testing will only be undertaken in critical health emergency responses.

What if I've been fit tested externally to Monash Health already?

You may not be required to be re-fit tested if you are able to supply evidence of the following:

- Type of respirator fit testing process performed
- Date of testing (must be within 12 months)
- Where the fit test occurred
- Respirator types tested and passed (greater than 3 respirators should be passed)
- Testing results and evidence of ≥ 100 pass result
- The passed respirators need to be in current stock at Monash Health – see [Resources](#)

If you meet the above criteria, please email RPPenquiries@monashhealth.org with documentation of your fit test. However, should you wish to be fit tested again at Monash Health, you are welcome to do so.

What happens if I can't take a fit test?

We understand some employees may have a valid reason (cultural, religious, medical) to not be able to take a test. In these cases, in order to protect your safety and the safety of your colleagues and patients, we will need to review whether you can safely work in your current role. If your work area does not require you to wear an N95 mask, then you can remain in the role. If the nature of your workplace changes at a later stage and a N95 mask is required, we will need to reassign you to another appropriate workplace.

What happens if I can't fit any of the available RPE?

If you cannot fit any of the available RPE then in order to protect your safety and the safety of your colleagues and patients we will need to review your current workplace and role. If your workplace does not require you to wear an N95 mask, then you can remain in the workplace. If the nature of your workplace changes and a N95 mask is required, we will need to reassign you to another appropriate workplace.

What is the reassignment process?

The reassignment process only applies to those employees that cannot fit any of the available RPE or cannot perform a fit test and their work area currently requires wearing an N95 mask. It is designed to find you a similar role in another workplace and will be done in consultation with you, your manager and the relevant People and Culture Business partner.

For further information regarding the Respiratory Protection Program, please visit:

<https://coronavirus.monashhealth.org/protecting-yourself/rpp/>