

QUANTITATIVE VS. QUALITATIVE FIT TESTING: FOR THE HEALTHCARE MARKET

Many healthcare facilities currently use qualitative methods, using Sacharrin or Bitrex®, to perform respirator fit tests. Qualitative testing is compliant but has many drawbacks. Read our comparison between qualitative and quantitative fit testing methods to learn about the reasons to switch to quantitative testing, using the PortaCount® Respirator Fit Tester.



QUALITATIVE FIT TESTING IS BASED ON SUBJECTIVE FEEDBACK

Qualitative fit testing is a manual method using an agent like Saccharin or Bitrex® to measure a respirator fit. The problem is these tests are based on the person's sense of taste or smell. Staff being fit tested often have difficulty accurately reporting whether they sense the challenge agent's presence or absence.

Did you know?

25% of Americans cannot taste bitter?

15% of adults worldwide may have a taste or smell problem.

Source: NIH

PORTACOUNT® PROVIDES OBJECTIVE AND DATA-BACKED TEST RESULTS

The PortaCount® Respirator Fit Tester utilizes the industry's top quantitative testing method to produce objective and numeric test results that accurately reflect the respirator fit. The quantitative fit testing method used by PortaCount® Respirator Fit Testers measures particles inside and outside of a respirator. These measurements form a ratio called a "Fit Factor" that gives administrators and staff real data on how respirators fit.

[Application Note on Fit Factor](#)

POOR MASK SELECTION WITH TRIAL AND ERROR

Qualitative fit testing does not provide guidance on choosing the right respirator beyond a pass or fail at the end of a lengthy test. Administrators must rely on their own experience to match respirators to staff. This leads to a time-consuming trial-and-error process to settle on a respirator that may or may not pass the subjective test.

IDENTIFY THE RIGHT RESPIRATOR QUICKLY

The real-time FitCheck® Mode feature allows administrators to quickly identify the right respirator and provide staff with a better understanding of how their respirator fits. Instant fit feedback reduces failed fit tests and enables the administrator to achieve a better fit in less time.

[Using Real-Time FitCheck® Mode on the PortaCount® for Mask Selection Blog](#)

NO TRAINING STAFF ON HOW TO WEAR RESPIRATORS CORRECTLY

The value of an N95 respirator is highly dependent on the proper use and fit. Training is crucial to the proper wear and use of a respirator and resulting protection. However, with qualitative fit testing, workers and staff cannot see the changes in protection levels during donning, adjustment, and wear.

AUTOMATIC TRAINING

FitCheck® Mode allows users to see the respirator fit on the screen through each phase of donning, adjustment, and training. When employees understand how respirators fit their face and see how proper size and alignment can affect their protection level.

[Video on FitCheck® Mode](#)

QUALITATIVE IS A MANUAL PROCESS

Qualitative relies on a fit test administrator's ability to perform the steps of a fit test and perform them correctly and consistently across all employees in their programs. The quality of the test relies on the competency of each fit test administrator. Fit test administrators may have differences in training, personnel experience, and organizational pressures, causing qualitative fit testing inconsistencies.

AUTOMATICALLY CONDUCT FIT TESTS PROPERLY

In FitPro™ Ultra Software, new fit test exercise animations illustrate how to properly conduct each fit test exercise and the proper cadence during the fit test. This helps to ensure consistency and greater compliance during fit testing and reduces the burden on fit test administrators.

[Video on In-Test Animations](#)

QUALITATIVE FIT TESTING IS TIME-CONSUMING

Qualitative 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.

A FASTER FIT TEST

PortaCount® Respirator Fit Tester complies with new OSHA Modified CNC Protocols. The modified CNC protocols enable fewer, shorter fit test exercises. Instead of eight exercises, the new rules require four. Total fit test time is reduced from 7:15 minutes to 2:29.

[Demo Video using OSHA Modified CNC Protocols](#) [Flyer OSHA Modified CNC Protocols](#)

QUALITATIVE FIT TESTING RECORDKEEPING IS MANUAL

Documenting results when you are using qualitative fit testing methods is a manual process and time-consuming.

AUTOMATIC RECORDKEEPING

The PortaCount® Respirator Fit Tester supplies objective testing data recorded automatically and easy to share.

