



RESPIRATOR FIT TESTING TRAINING

PROGRAMME OUTLINE FOR CANDIDATES

Version 2 – Sept 2020 (e-learning portal)

The purpose of this training programme is to improve the quality and increase the capacity of respirator fit testing undertaken in New Zealand.

This will improve the correct wearing and fit of respiratory protection for workers contributing to a reduction in occupational respiratory disease.

Programme Overview

Fit testing is an important function undertaken by a range of health and safety professionals. It has been recognized that an industry led training programme and competency regime is required to ensure health and safety professionals who undertake fit testing are doing so in a competent manner.

The training programme goal is to provide the necessary knowledge and understanding of fit testing and demonstrate how fit testing can be carried out via qualitative taste and quantitative Condensation Nuclei Counter (CNC) methods.

This training and assessment programme is based on ISO 16975-3 Respiratory protective devices - Selection, use and maintenance - Part 3: Fit-testing procedures and includes NZ specific RPE requirements outlined in AS/NZS 1715 Selection, use and maintenance of respiratory protective equipment. The programme is managed and administered by NZOHS.

Candidates are responsible for supplying their own respiratory protective equipment and fit testing equipment required for the assessment.

This training programme relates to fit testing of respiratory protective equipment (RPE) only. Recommendations relating to correct PPE selection for controlling specific hazards are not given. This can only be decided upon by the employer, after a thorough risk assessment, followed by analysis of the most appropriate way of overcoming the hazard faced.

Awareness of how fit testing is part of a complete RPE management program is included in the scope of this training program. Development and evaluation of an entire RPE program should only be conducted by or in consultation with an Occupational Hygienist or other competent person.

The practical assessment process (upon which competence is based) is secondary to the training process. Upon completion of the training program (including a theory exam) and with some practical experience, candidates should be able to achieve competence via the practical assessment process.

Advantages (upon a successful assessment)

Why obtain competency for RPE fit testing, what advantages will it deliver?

- It will demonstrate to PCBUs & WorkSafe that you have demonstrated competence in fit testing to a recognized standard.
- It will demonstrate that you strive to deliver services in alignment with best practice.
- You will hold a certificate as a competent fit tester according the ISO criteria and be listed on the NZOHS register of competent fit testers.
- It will enhance the status of RPE fit testing as a 'professional' service.

Applying for Training and Competency Assessment

Registrations for the training programme should be made through the NZOHS website training page <https://nzohs.org.nz/training/> (contact admin@nzohs.org.nz with any queries regarding registration. Scheduling of assessments after completion of the course should be made to commit2fit@nzohs.org.nz.

You will be required to confirm:

- Which fit test methods you wish to be assessed
- You have access to fit test equipment for the methods you wish to be assessed on. NZOHS does not provide fit test equipment
- Which portion of the programme you want to participate in. For experienced NZ fit testers, you may wish bypass the initial self-paced training material and attempt the knowledge assessment. This is only recommended for those with depth of knowledge of the associated ISO and AS/NZ Standards and familiarity with WorkSafe guidance for respiratory protection in NZ.
- If you require a mentor to gain practical experience in fit testing before scheduling the practical assessment. Mentoring is not guaranteed and is subject to availability and scope of mentoring.

You will be expected to have a good knowledge of ISO 16975-3 and AS/NZS 1715. You will also need a detailed knowledge of the type of RPE and the fit testing method you will be using. The documents referenced above can be purchased online and there are other free resources available in the NZOHS e-learning portal.

It will be necessary to have completed appropriate training and mentoring prior to the practical assessment to ensure competence. We recommend that persons new to fit testing are mentored to gain the practical hands-on experience required to be successful in the practical assessment. It is unlikely that competency will be achieved without training and 'on the job' experience.

Training Programme Overview

Internationally, there are several fit testing methods and protocols. The training scheme provides the knowledge required to be a competent fit tester in NZ and provides recommendations for what practical skills and experience are needed to gain competence. The two methods included in the training and competence scheme are:

- Qualitative – Taste method (Saccharin and Bittrex agents)
- Quantitative - Ambient aerosol condensation nuclei-counting (CNC) method (PortaCount or equivalent)

The training is designed for online live webinar delivery and will cover material and live demonstration of all the areas on the competency checklist used for the practical assessment.

Practical Assessment Program Overview

Candidates will be asked to carry out a fit test for each method for which they are being assessed and demonstrate knowledge as detailed in the competency checklist (Figure 1). A guide will be provided prior to the assessment detailing the procedure including the competency checklist (Figure 1). The assessor will clarify any questions before the assessment begins and may ask questions during the assessment.

Fit testing equipment and facilities are NOT provided as part of the assessment scheme. Candidates are responsible for ensuring they have access to all fit testing equipment they wish to be assessed on.



Respirator Fit Tester Competency Checklist

Name of trainee: _____	
Fit-test method: _____	
Evaluated by: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____	
	Acceptable (Y/N)
1. Demonstrates knowledge of Respirator used for the fit test	
– Respirator components and their function	
– Respirator inspection, cleaning, and maintenance	
– Different make, model, style and size Respirator	
– Respirator capabilities and limitations as related to fit testing	
– Proper donning and doffing procedures including wearer-seal checks	
2. Demonstrates knowledge of the fit-test method	
– Purpose of fit testing	
– Fit-test procedures	
– Limitations of the fit-test method	
– Questionable fit-test results	
– Health and Safety Hazards of fit test equipment and chemicals	
3. Demonstrates ability to set up fit-test equipment	
– Selection of proper cartridges or filters for the fit-test method	
– Preparation of required equipment and materials	
– Performance of operational checks	
– Proper installation of probes or fit-test adapters	
4. Demonstrates the ability to conduct the fit test	
– When to refuse to conduct a fit test	
– Explanation of fit-test purpose and procedures to person being fit tested	
– Observation and evaluation of unassisted donning procedure	
– Observation that user seal checks are performed	
– Observes the person being fit tested to ensure it is conducted correctly	
– Conducts the fit-test method according to ISO or OSHA protocols	
– Properly interprets and records results	
– Performs Respirator cleaning, sanitizing or disposal	
5. Demonstrate the ability to identify likely causes of fit-test failure	
– Improperly donned or adjusted Respirator	
– Incorrectly assembled or damaged Respirator	
– Incorrect size, shape or style Respirator	

Training and Assessment Flow Diagram

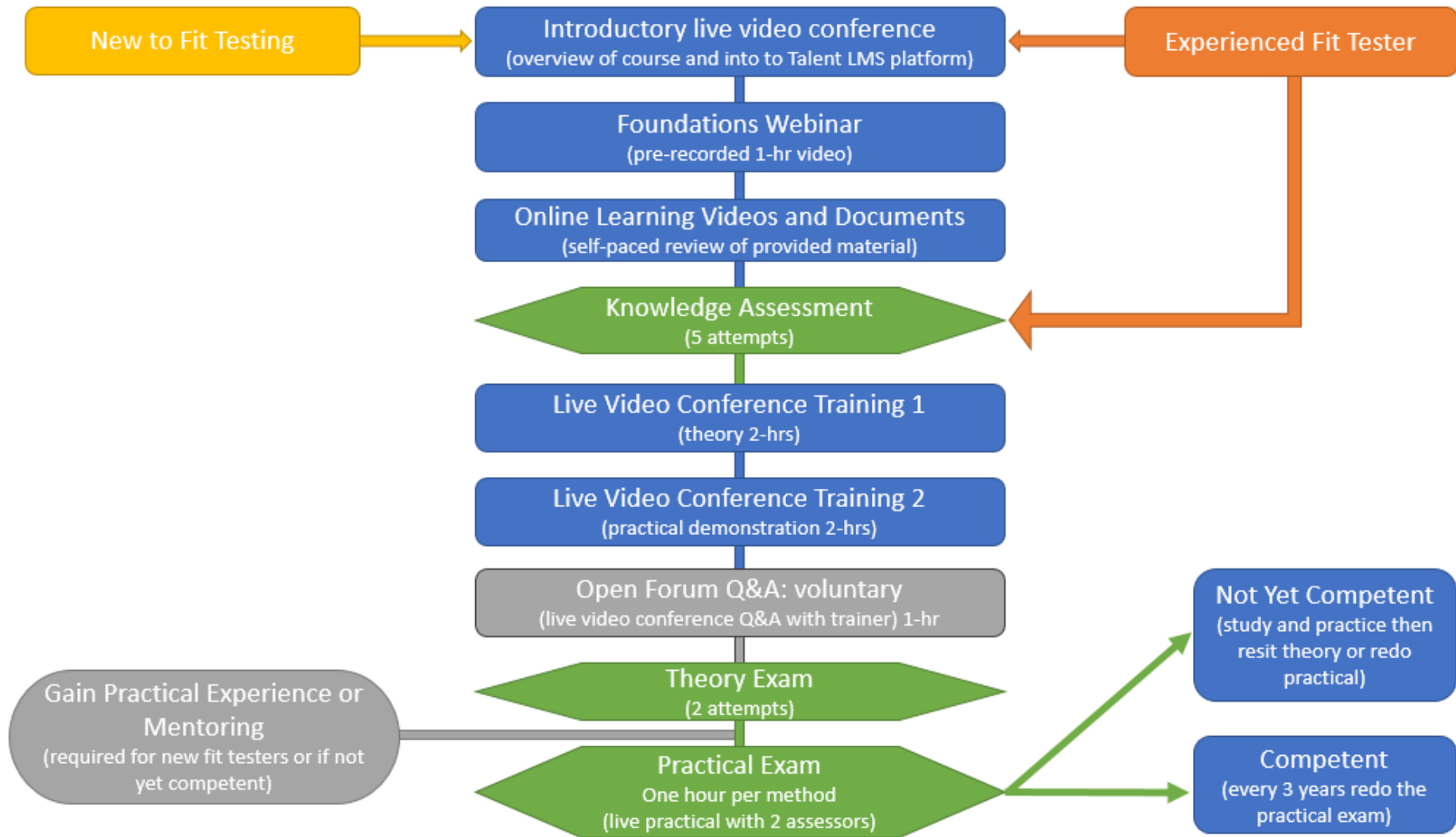


Figure 1. Flow Diagram of Course and Assessment Process.

Training and Assessment Outline

- 1) Training – Online delivery, mixed model of self-paced learning and live webinar**
 - a) Introductory video conference (live) on how the course is run including navigation of the online training platform and answer any questions about the process (1-hr).
 - b) Foundations Webinar: Pre-recorded webinar available through online training platform viewed first as an overview (2-hrs) (self-study)
 - c) Online learning: Self-paced review of documents and videos through the online training platform to orient the learner to the basics of fit testing and advice for respiratory protection from NZ and other countries. Review of these materials is to prepare the learner for the online (live webinar) workshop to be able to engage with questions and discussion. Materials area available for the duration of the training until the Theory Exam is complete.
 - d) Knowledge Assessment: A quiz delivered on the online training platform designed to assess the learner's comprehension and understanding of the material. A score of at least 60% is required to progress to the Online Workshops. Quiz is open for 3 days. There are five attempts allowed to achieve a 60% pass rate.
 - e) Training - live video conference: Two online (live webinar) sessions delivered on Zoom (or other) video conferencing platform.
 - i) Session one is a depth of knowledge seminar designed to provide the theory and knowledge to be a competent fit tester in NZ. It allows for discussion on the online learning documents/videos and provides an in-depth review of critical sections of ISO 16975-3 and AS/NZS 1715 (2-hrs)
 - ii) Session two is a practical demonstration of qualitative (taste) and quantitative (PortaCount) fit testing using a variety of RPE and allowing for questions, discussion, and live troubleshooting of common issues in fit testing (2-hrs).
 - f) Open forum Q&A Session: Is a voluntary 1-hr live online session to allow learners to ask any questions from any part of the course or about general fit test practice.
- 2) Assessment - Online delivery, mixed model of online exam and live web practical**
 - a) Theory Exam: Has two functions 1) Acts as the final exam for the training course and must be completed to successfully complete the training course and 2) Is the theory portion of the assessment used to determine fit tester competence and must be completed before a practical assessment can be scheduled. The theory exam is comprehensive of all the material provided and is delivered on the online training platform. It is open for 3 days and requires a score of 80% to pass. Two attempts are allowed. There is a re-sitting fee if 80% is not achieved in the first two attempts (during the re-sit process, the candidate has two more attempts to achieve an 80% pass rate).

Practical Assessment: Is the final step to verify fit tester competency. The practical assessment is structured on ISO 16975-3 and should take about 1-hr for one method and 1.5 to 2 hours for both methods. The practical assessment is scheduled after completing the training via commit2fit@nzohs.org.nz email. Results are emailed to the candidate within one working week of the assessment. There is a re-sitting fee if the candidate is deemed "not yet competent".

Commit2Fit Certificate of Competency

Upon successful completion of the training, theory exam, and practical assessment, candidates will receive a Certificate of Competency listing the methods for which they have been assessed with a unique identifier number.

Concurrent with their certificate, competent candidates will be listed in the New Zealand Occupational Hygiene Society NZOHS Website, under Commit2Fit <https://nzohs.org.nz/commit2fit/>; where PCBUs interested in engaging a competent fit tester can confirm their competency.

Terms & Conditions

The following terms and conditions apply to all Fit Test Providers undertaking the training programme and competency assessment.

1. Payment: - All fees are paid in advance. The fee is not refundable if a candidate withdraws from the training or competency process or fails to attend.
2. Competency: - Competency is granted to the individual achieving the required competence level. It is not a 'company' status or transferable to any other party, in anyway. Competency status will remain with the individual until the renewal period expires (a maximum of three years). Within the 3-year period, re-assessment can be applied for and following a successful assessment be granted for a further 3 years and so on.
3. Failure to pass an exam or practical assessment: - There is no limit to the number of times the exam or assessment process can be entered. On each occasion, the appropriate fee is payable.
4. Liability: - Participation in the training programme and gaining competency confirms that at the point of assessment, the provider was deemed competent of meeting the required criteria. It does not, in any way, imply the NZOHS, or its trainers and assessors, will bear any responsibility whatsoever in the event of a provider failing to satisfactorily carry out their duties whilst fit testing (or any other service they may undertake). It is strongly recommended that fit testers ensure they are adequately insured for their fit testing activities, such as Professional Indemnity Insurance / Public Liability Insurance.
5. Limitations: - Competency assessment this training programme confirms that at the point of assessment, the fit test provider was deemed competent of meeting the required criteria. NZOHS cannot guarantee the future and ongoing competence of a competent Fit Test Provider. It is the responsibility of the fit tester to ensure they only undertake fit testing activities to which they have been assessed as competent. We would expect that fit testers will conduct themselves in a professional manner in accordance with Code of Ethics outlined by their professional organisations.
6. Fit Test Equipment: -NZOHS is not responsible for providing the candidate with fit test equipment and/or gear required for the training, practicing and/or assessment portion of this program. It is the responsibility of the candidate to source the equipment required.