

Health & Safety Committee

Improved Respirator Fit Testing at the Annual Meeting in Chicago

The Health & Safety Committee is happy to announce a new and improved respirator fit testing for the Annual Meeting in Chicago! We have listened to your feedback, and have modified the process to make fit testing more accessible. The new program includes:

- An online lecture - no more conflicts with Annual Meeting programming.
- More options for medical evaluations. Medical evaluations will be provided through a Chicago-based clinic that has been contracted by AIC (and are included in the price of the fit test); or you can still see your own doctor.
- CIPP members get a free fit test if they sign up for the CIPP Seminar (CIPP members get a discount on a fit test even if they don't attend the seminar).

Appointments are limited, so register now!

WHY GET A RESPIRATOR FIT TEST?

The AIC Fit Test Program is specifically designed for conservators, particularly those who are self-employed or who do not have a respiratory protection program provided through their employer. Whether you are using hazardous chemicals in your laboratory or working with mold-infested artifacts after a flood, you need to be sure you are protected with a properly fitting respirator.

- Do the elastic straps still pull tightly?
- Do you need a new type or size due to facial changes resulting from weight gain or loss, or surgery?
- Are you using the right kind of protection for your hazard?

The US Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) requires that individuals be fit tested on an annual basis to assess the condition of both the respirator and the user. If you perform work that requires the use of a respirator, your employer must provide the appropriate respiratory protection, medical evaluation, training, information, and fit testing; even disposable dust masks are considered respirators by OSHA, and require proper fit testing.

It is important to be proactive in your own health and safety and to follow OSHA recommendations and protocols, even if you are self-employed.

WHAT IS INVOLVED?

The AIC Respirator Fit Test Program consists of three parts to comply with the OSHA standard:

1. An OSHA respirator medical evaluation questionnaire completed by the registrant and reviewed prior to the fit test.
2. An informational lecture (~1 hour) and quiz to make sure that you have been presented with information that is critical to a respirator training program.
3. An individual fit test. Fit test appointments will be available on Tuesday, May 30 (9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.), and Wednesday, May 31 (8:30-11:30 a.m.).

Note that a qualified Occupational Safety Professional or Certified Industrial Hygienist will conduct the lecture and fit test.



Industrial hygienist Lee Foley conducts a respirator fit test for conservator Steven Pickman at a Washington Conservation Guild fit test. Photo courtesy of Anne Kingery-Schwartz.

Registrants can bring their own respirator if they already use one and/or try on a selection of sample respirators. They will be contacted directly by a member of the Health & Safety Committee with a link to the online lecture, to discuss medical evaluation options, and schedule appointments.

HOW TO REGISTER?

Registration for a fit test can be completed through the [AIC Annual Meeting](#) online portal.

- This year, the Conservators in Private Practice (CIPP) Specialty Group is generously funding fit testing for its membership. CIPP members who register for the CIPP seminar, “Innovative ‘Tools’ to Enhance Your Business,” can also sign up for a free fit test.
- If you are a CIPP member and cannot attend the seminar, you are still eligible to sign up for a fit test at a reduced rate of \$30 (a 50% discount from the regular registration fee). If you aren't currently a member, add CIPP to your AIC membership renewal before the meeting to receive this benefit (\$25).
- From the “Sessions” checkout screen, select the “Respirator Fit Test” option and the appropriate registration status (regular, CIPP member, or CIPP seminar attendee), and proceed to checkout. AIC will confirm your status eligibility prior to contacting you about scheduling a specific appointment. We look forward to seeing you in Chicago!

The Committee would like to thank all the members who completed our online survey! Fit Test organizers are making sure they address all the helpful comments, questions and concerns.

—Members of the AIC Health & Safety Committee