Why are annual FIT TESTS required?
OSHA requires annual fit testing: 29 CFR 1910.134

Administrator

Time for your annual fit testing!

It usually only takes 15–20 minutes.

Worker

Can we do this another day?
I’ve got so much to do.

I’m busy. You’re busy. Why is it necessary to do this EVERY YEAR?

Bottom line...

If your respirator doesn’t fit, it can’t efficiently protect you.
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NIOSH Facts

NIOSH research confirms the need for annual testing: 10% of subjects failed a fit test after 1 year using the same make, model, and size respirator.

NIOSH research also suggests that those who have lost > 20lbs should prioritize getting fit tested again right away. Other facial changes requiring fit testing include significant weight gain, extensive dental work, scarring, or cosmetic surgery.

Respirator fit CAN change over time. If your respirator doesn’t fit, it doesn’t work.

If the respirator fit is unacceptable, the worker must be given the opportunity to select a different respirator and be retested.

Sources:
New NIOSH Study Supports the OSHA Annual Fit Testing Requirements for Filtering Facepiece Respirators, http://blogs.cdc.gov/niosh-science-blog/2016/01/05/fit-testing/