

RME Services Ltd – Health and Safety Management

Face Fit Testing Requirements and Policy for Respiratory Protective Equipment

RME Services provides Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE) or face masks in order to protect its employees from exposure to hazardous air-borne vapour, particulates and the like. In order for a face mask to be effective, it must fit the wearer's face tightly. It cannot provide adequate protection if it leaks. The Company will accordingly ensure that fit testing is carried out by an approved competent person individually for each employee at the time of initial provision of face masks. Thereafter, fit testing will be repeated at pre-determined intervals or at other appropriate times to address personal physical changes that have occurred.

The face masks that are provided as standard issue rely on a good seal to the face so that air can only be drawn in via the filter material to clean it. Minor gaps or inadequate fit will permit contaminated air to pass into a person's lungs. It is therefore imperative that on each occasion that a face mask is necessary and used, it must be ensured by the user that it has been put on correctly and checked as providing a good fit. To this end, facial hair, which includes both stubble and beards, makes it impossible to achieve a good seal between mask and face. It is thus a Company requirement that any employee that needs to use a face mask as a protective measure must have been face fit tested and must be clean shaven, which includes absence of stubble. Jewellery that could affect a seal between the mask and face must also not be present. If these criteria cannot be fully satisfied by any employee, that employee is not permitted to undertake work in an environment where air contaminated by vapour, particulates or similar is likely to be present until corrective measures have been addressed. It is imperative that clean air is breathed in by employees under all operating conditions to enable them to remain healthy.

The Company will ensure that fit testing is repeated at regular intervals to ensure that the use of Respiratory Protective Equipment remains effective. However, there are other appropriate times when further fit testing may need to be carried out. These are identified in the following:

- (a) Where a person has had significant weight loss or gain
- (b) Where there has been major dental work
- (c) Where significant facial injury has been sustained

In cases where any of the above three items are relevant, the employee concerned will be required to notify his line manager to ensure that appropriate action is taken in a timely manner.

Health and Safety is the responsibility of all employees, who must ensure that face masks fit properly, are checked prior to use and are appropriately maintained, cleaned and stored. Continued use of inadequately fitted or sub-standard Respiratory Protective Equipment would be a breach of legislation for which the Company could be prosecuted.



Trevor Roberts
Managing Director
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