



Colin Hailing – Head of Group Health, Safety, Environmental, Quality & Training, Parkstone Group Ltd.

Face Fit Testing in Practice

Colin explained that as a construction company they have to prove they are doing all they can for their operatives from

an HSE point of view regarding occupational health.

Parkstone has a policy and procedure which requires new employees following their induction to have a face fit test before going out on site. All Site Managers, Works Managers and Supervisors undertake the testing so as to assess the staff on site. There is also a kit on every site. The majority of clients insist all their employees are fitted and the assessors have certificates as evidence they are trained.

Face Fit Records

They use all three sizes of the Moldex respirator and stock is kept on site. They have a computerised system so that when an employee is face fitted the information is scanned onto the computer so that a certificate can be produced if the employee moves site and is unable to produce a copy.

Toolbox Talks

They provide their employees with Toolbox Talks. They are a member of Construct Concrete Structures Group and follow the Safe System of Work (SSoW) principles. Site managers regularly patrol the sites to check whether the masks are being worn correctly.

Beards and Cultural Issues

From their experience, employees with beards for religious or other personal reasons can be a problem. Colin has even observed employees growing beards in an effort to avoid those tasks where respirators are required! He then has to either identify alternative methods of protection or move those who are clean shaven onto the tasks requiring respirators.

Use and Abuse

In Parkstone's experience, trying to get their employees to look after their equipment is difficult and also costly when having to replace lost or damaged items. Getting the message across that the equipment is there to protect them is a major battle. Member Debra Wyatt, an HR professional from Peninsula, advised that issues relating to PPE can be addressed as part of the contract of employment. Such contractual conditions will make it easier to deal with those employees who persistently fail to wear their PPE. In the case of misuse/abuse of the PPE, a statement to the effect that charges may be levied in certain circumstances may also be covered in the contract.

George thanked Colin for the way in which he had delivered his presentation stating how useful it is to gain the perspective of the employer/user and not just the manufacturer. George invited members, as practitioners, to consider giving a 10 minute Members' Corner presentation to relate their health and safety experiences and specific problems encountered in their line of work. Such experiences can often be invaluable in helping others overcome similar problems, and sometimes of more value than a one day seminar. Anyone interested in doing a slot should get in touch with Liz Prohett.

Special thanks also to **Paul Salisbury**, Managing Director **Fire Safe International Ltd.** and a BHSEA Member. Paul dropped in to the meeting today on his way to Glasgow on business. Paul happened to have a selection of respiratory protection equipment in his car boot, and kindly offered to bring them in and put on display for Members to have a look at.