



# Fit Testing Matters



Incredibly there are 13,000 deaths each year in the UK as a result of occupational respiratory diseases. While many of this number are the result of historic legacy work practices, alarmingly it is reported that there are up to 10,000 new cases of lung and workplace respiratory diseases reported each year.

Occupational Respiratory Disease is widely recognised as a major cause of work related ill health and fatalities.

## Fit Testing Matters...Why?

Research indicates that up half of the RPE in use does not provide the wearer with the level of protection expected. One of the major reasons for this is **that it simply does not fit.**

Consider that after all the work involved in the risk assessing process adequate Respiratory Protective Equipment has been carefully selected to protect against the hazard, yet the protection is not provided because it has either not been fit tested or not been fit tested by a competent capable individual.

The regulations state clearly that tight fitting face pieces must be fit tested to the individual and that face fitting process must be carried out by a **competent** person.

It is essential that the RPE provides the level of protection expected and to achieve that it is vital that it fits the wearer. A detailed respiratory programme can be utterly compromised if the mask does not fit the wearer.

**The Fit2Fit Respiratory Protective Equipment Fit Test Providers Accreditation Scheme exists to ensure an individual carrying out this very important task is competent to do so.**



*Users should insist that their provider is accredited.*

## Valid Face Fit Testing

Over recent months there has been a great deal of conversation and debate over the use of fit checking in place of a face fit test.

The regulator, the Health and Safety Executive has formally written to BSIF and in it, states that it considers the qualitative and quantitative fit test methods described in OC 282/28 to be suitable and sufficient.

They do not currently consider any alternative fit test methods to be suitable. The HSE are keen to work with industry to refine existing and develop additional methods [for the future.](#)

To see a copy of the HSE letter [click on this link](#)

# Raising the Quality



## **Fit2Fit announce the launch of the Fit Testing Training Approval Scheme.**

*That was the banner on the newsletter from summer 2014 but the response back to date has been slow to begin with. In another piece in the newsletter we talked about the need to prove competency and increase pass rates. In Addition to applicants failing to achieve competency accreditation ,through lack of experience, it is also apparent that Training Course Content from some providers appears not to match the HSE criteria & syllabus necessary.*

*On the back of that demand Fit2Fit created the opportunity for training course providers to have their course approved making sure that its' syllabus was instead in line with HSE's 282/28 and HSG 53.*

*Prior to the development and launch of the **Fit2Fit Training Course Approval Scheme** no independent assessment of the content and quality of courses was available.*

*The time to get your course submitted for approval is now. The great benefit to all is that courses will be able to equip delegates with the necessary learning to start on the right road to becoming proficient face fitters.*

*This recognised approval scheme will closely audit the written and practical elements of submitted courses by experienced qualified professionals.*

*What the approval scheme will not do is asses or monitor individual trainer's capabilities or delivery. However the training course approval will, as a minimum, require trainers to be themselves Fit2Fit Accredited. As soon as your course is approved you can promote that fact to your customer base.*

*To submit your course for approval the new application form and instructions pack can be sourced by visiting [www.fit2fit.org](http://www.fit2fit.org)*



## **In Brief**

- *Craig Phair of Arco has joined the stable of Fit2Fit Assessors and will be additional cover in Scotland*
- *Q Fit the automatic nebuliser system for Qualitative Face Fit Testing has been withdrawn from the market. Any accreditations done using this device will need to be re-assessed using the manual nebuliser*
- *Fit2Fit – the Trade Mark- has been successfully registered*
- *Fit2Fit logo must only be used on certificates issued by an accredited individual. There had been instances where companies who had some but not all staff accredited were making use of the logo regardless of the status of the fit tester*
- *OC 282/28 has been the subject of speculation on updating of the document. This is still under debate with HSE but what is clear is that the HSE will still hold regulatory ownership for the guidance in it*
- *The BSIF – Clean Air Take Care – programme is undergoing a refresh and will be re-launched at the turn of the year. The next edition will feature the crucial role that effective face fitting plays in delivering a successful RPE programme*
- *N95 Going forward the Fit2Fit Accreditation badges and certificates for the Quantitative method include details on the model of N95 technology or if not assessed the badging and certification will state that N95 is excluded*
- *Exam review – A detailed review of the accreditation's written exam questions has been undertaken and the papers now benefit from fresh, updated questions*
- *Taste Test Hoods – Previously there have been issues raised corning the sizes of some hoods and their "large" capacities and consequent issues that that raises on concentration levels of the taste challenge chemical inside the hood. This situation is being looked at by HSL*
- *Candidate Handbooks and Accreditation syllabus – each has been updated in line with latest edition of HSE guidance HSG 53*

# Can you carry out a Face Fit on more than one subject at a Time?



## Fit2Fit Opinion on multiple simultaneous fit testing

It is the opinion of the Fit2Fit Testers Accreditation Scheme, that in order to carry out a competent fit test, the fit test must be carried out on the basis of one fit tester to one RPE wearer. This is the position for both Qualitative and Quantitative fit test methods.

The reason that we have found it necessary to make this opinion known is that there have been several instances in the UK market where multiple testing has been offered by providers. In response Fit2Fit, using vastly experienced assessors attempted to run a variety of sessions of multiple simultaneous face fitting. Even, with such capable fit testers it was clear that there were many issues. This was especially true while carrying out the face fit utilising the Qualitative method.

In the testing that Fit2Fit carried out the observation of multiple subjects by an assessor was almost impossible.

However, we accept that there are individual fit testers whose skill level in managing the Quantitative fit test method using the TSi PortaCounts is such that they could competently conduct fit testing for 2 RPE wearers simultaneously.

Recognition and acknowledgement of such individual fit testers under the Fit2Fit Fit Testers Accreditation Scheme would be on a case by case basis and subject to specific application and practical assessment.



## Fit2Fit Accredited Face Fit Testers, “The Community Grows”

Good occupational respiratory health is well served by having face-fit services carried out by capable competent providers. There are now over 230 individuals who hold the Fit2Fit Accreditation in the UK.

There are also several accredited individuals now in the Benelux areas so Fit2Fit is growing internationally.

At this time last year there were 170 accredited providers so we can see that RPE users and the market is able to be better served as correct face fitting supports the efficacy of the RPE and this makes a significant contribution to the reduction in incidence of occupational respiratory disease.

The Fit2Fit Accreditation currently sees a failure rate (over the last 12 months) of 24% and 36% on Quantitative and Qualitative methods respectively. In the main it appears that the main cause of failure is lack of experience.

It is of concern that this failure rate is at the level that it is, not from the point of view of the accreditation process but from the position of the capability and competence of providers carrying out this service every day. The Fit2Fit failure rate is 36% on the Quantitative method, and that is on individuals who have presented themselves for the assessment, it follows that a similar percentage of non-accredited providers are actively providing the RPE user with a service that may not be “competent”.

**The law says that a face fit must be carried out by a competent person. Is it not high time that the regulator insisted that competence be demonstrated before an individual is able to sell this service?**