
RESPIRATORY PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (RPE) POLICY



INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE) is to protect individuals from exposure to substances such as dusts, mists, fumes, vapours, and gases which may be damaging to health. Frequently this damage occurs by inhalation of harmful levels of these substances, for example, when working with materials which expose airborne particles such as silicates i.e., concrete dust.

SCOPE OF POLICY

This policy applies to all Forkers Group employees (including subcontractor / Labour-only contractors) who are required to carry out tasks which may result in exposure to airborne contaminants, and which require the individual to **wear tight fitting RPE.**

FACE FIT TESTING

An employee (including subcontractor / Labour-only contractors), who is required to wear tight fitting RPE as determined by Forkers Group COSHH risk assessments, must undertake a face fit test before using the equipment, to ensure that there is a good, efficient seal around the face.

Facial hair significantly reduces the effectiveness of tight-fitting respiratory protection and therefore in accordance with HSE guidance (HSG53 Respiratory Protective Equipment at Work), individuals must ensure that they are **clean shaven**, whenever they are required to wear and use RPE.

Re-tests will be carried out, when there has been a change in the RPE model Forkers Group uses or when there has been a change in an individual's appearance, for example, weight loss/gain or a change in facial shape due to dental work, scars, moles etc or a change to the risk assessment.

Face fit testing will only be carried out by a competent and authorised person who has been trained in both the operation of the equipment and instruction and training of respirator wearers.

The results of all tests will be recorded and held on everyone's HR record (& held at site for individuals who are to use RPE) or held at the site location of a subcontractor / Labour-only contractor.

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Employees (including subcontractor / Labour-only contractors), who are required to use RPE must carry out a pre-use check, immediately before using the equipment to ensure it is not damaged, has not deteriorated since last used and still functions correctly.

Employees (including subcontractor / Labour-only contractors) must use the storage arrangements provided to protect the RPE when not in use from contamination.

Defective or damaged equipment must be replaced.

If an employee (including subcontractor / Labour-only contractors), has a beard for religious reasons or has a medical condition which might be affected using the RPE provided, then they should contact their line manager who will liaise with the SHEQ Department.

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MAINTENANCE AND REPLACEMENT

Managers and Supervisors are responsible for ensuring the manufacturer's maintenance schedule for RPE including provision of storage, cleaning, examination, recommended replacement periods, repair, testing and shelf life is followed.

MONITORING

Managers, supervisors and SHEQ Department are responsible for checking that tight fitting RPE is being correctly utilised by employees (including subcontractor / Labour-only contractors) and will report any non-compliance to the SHEQ Manager and/or Construction Director.

POLICY VIOLATIONS

Failure to comply with this policy may result in individuals being investigated and disciplinary action taken against them in accordance with Forkers Group Disciplinary Procedures and/or a Red/Yellow Card (XC000AA19) maybe issued especially where the person(s) are employed by a Subcontractor or Labour-only contractor.

RELATED POLICIES

The Respiratory Protective Equipment Policy links to the following policies and/or procedures which can be accessed on the Intranet, or requested from your line manager or from the SHEQ Department:

- GG124002 Occupational Health & Safety Policy Statement
- GD723001 Employee Handbook
- GG106005 H&S Policy Manual
- GG115015 The Safety Health Environmental Handbook



D Cartwright, Construction Director

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