

[ABS07]

The Quality of RPD Fit Testing in the UK

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Fit testing in the UK was first introduced into the HSE Control of Asbestos Regulations in 1999. The types of Respiratory Protective Devices (RPD) used within this industry were typically full face mask powered respirators, half masks and FFP3 filtering facepieces. The methods of fit testing employed for these devices were the TSI Portacount and the test chamber method. The requirement for fit testing was expanded in 2002 in the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations and thus covered all types of tight fitting RPD in whatever industry sector they are used. Thus lower classes of filtering facepieces FFP2 and FFP1 came under this requirement. Fit testing methods therefore now included qualitative fit testing. Over the years concerns have been raised from the RPD community – manufacturers and users - on the quality of fit testing being conducted – even of that offered as a commercial service. In more recent times the demand for fit testing has dramatically increased with more in-house testing – particularly in the healthcare sector in preparation for pandemic flu, who encountered significant problems. In this sector the preferred method of fit testing is the qualitative taste method. The RPD sector looked to HSE to improve the quality of fit testing and to address the concerns surrounding poor fit testing. In response HSE offered to support the RPD sector in any actions designed to improve the quality of fit testing. The British Safety Industry Federation (BSIF) took up this challenge and developed a Fit Test Providers Accreditation Scheme with the assistance and support of HSE – *Fit2Fit*. This presentation explains the need for the scheme, how it came to fruition, how it operates, its benefits, and addresses some of the common areas of mistakes.