



## ***Parker Merchanting's head to toe service raises health and safety standards***

### **The challenge**

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) estimates that over 500 construction workers die every year as a result of exposure to silica dust. In a bid to raise awareness of the issue of air pollution and the importance of having the right respiratory gear, Parker Merchanting wanted to position itself as a real driving force in raising safety standards particularly within the RPE (Respiratory Protective Equipment) market with their regional staff fully accredited to carry out Fit2Fit testing and able to offer sound advice.

Parker Merchanting, a Registered Safety Supplier and a leading supplier of consumables to the construction industry, wanted to enhance its customer offering and ensure staff were fully equipped with the knowledge to provide customer consultation on PPE, that regulation compliance is achieved and that all PPE products supplied are fit for purpose.

### **The solution**

As an existing member of the BSIF, Parker Merchanting embraced the Fit2Fit scheme which is designed in collaboration with the HSE and other industry stakeholders, to confirm the competency of any person performing face-piece fit testing. Detailed by CoSHH regulations, it is a legal requirement that workers using tight fitting respiratory protective equipment (face pieces/masks) must be fit tested by a competent person. Anyone wishing to be part of the scheme must pass an industry recognised exam, demonstrating that they have a thorough knowledge of the HSE guidance on fit testing and that they know how to fit test in practical circumstances. By substantially increasing the correct fitting of RPE, the aim is to significantly reduce the incidence of occupational respiratory disease.

As an extension to this commitment, Parker Merchants of the Parker team will arrange for a PPE manufacturer to visit a site and show employees how to use their equipment safely. This is an important part of the working relationship for Parker Merchants; ensuring that its customers are not only provided with the correct safety equipment but are trained to use it correctly and that employees understand the importance of correct specification.

### **The results**

Parker Merchants was commended for its Fit2Fit testing sessions by Andrew Morgan of Redrow Homes with which Parker Merchants has a collaborative relationship. He commented: "I would like to thank the Parker Merchants team for running the 'Training Days' for our business and associated contractors.

"They were a great success and all attendees were fully engaged and absorbed the message given by your accredited team as to the importance of adopting the correct RPE (Respiratory Protection Equipment). I was able to attend one of the sessions held in South Wales and must commend you on the professionalism and training abilities of your staff".

By implementing the BSIF's Fit2Fit scheme, Parker Merchants is now able to provide Face Fit testing for customers purchasing and using RPE, and staff can offer user-tailored advice on RPE. This ensures that health and safety decisions are made with the user in mind, regulation compliance is achieved and the products supplied are fit for purpose.

**-ENDS-**