

## Quality remains the name of the game

Written by Jaco de Klerk

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Some say the personal protective equipment (PPE) industry in South Africa is in a state of flux, with new players and products entering mainly the lower end of the market. However, the need for high-performance PPE that offers superior protection remains unchanged.

According to Stephen Burrow, sales director of the Sturrock & Robson Safety Group/HSE Solutions: “It is our experience that organisations with sound safety track records still require PPE that meets the highest quality standards and offers the best lifetime value. Furthermore, our customers demand the constant innovation that only a reputable manufacturer can deliver.”

Burrow is passionate about maintaining quality in the PPE industry: “Manufacturers should continue to advance technology to provide PPE that is both innovative and cost-effective. Workers need to be encouraged to comply with safety regulations by being provided with PPE that they wear with comfort, pride and confidence,” he says.

“How many times do we see companies proclaiming their staff to be their greatest assets? Yet, too many organisations pay lip service to this proclamation by sidestepping their duty to provide optimum protection in the pursuit of short-term gain,” he continues.

“One of the major culprits contributing to the increased risk of avoidable accidents is the lowering of standards in the PPE industry. The scramble for cheap products that barely meet minimum standards, while offering no safety benefits, has effectively turned the industry into a regressive market where decreasing consideration is given to value, quality, reliability and life time safety,” Burrow adds.

HSE Solutions is the exclusive distributor of Honeywell Safety Products, which is a global leader in respiratory protective equipment, among other products.

Its comprehensive range of single-use masks includes both folded and moulded types available with or without valves. The masks have adjustable coloured nose bridges to identify the classification being used.

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The Premium 5000 Series range also features HSE's patented Willtech seal technology, for increased comfort and protection. Honeywell single-use masks provide quality protection at competitive prices.

MSA Africa believes that superior quality should be backed up by good after-sales support. Theo Nel, after-sales service supervisor at MSA Africa, states that the company is starting a campaign to encourage its customers to take up preventative maintenance contracts. This involves monthly on-site audits of their equipment by a technician, who will inform them when maintenance or repair work is due.

"Our customers are well covered with a number of MSA Africa service centres in cities including Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban and Lagos, as well as in remote regions across Africa. Should a customer's area not be included, we will arrange for their equipment to be transported to the nearest centre, or for the dispatch of a technician to their facility," says Nel.

The after-sales solution can be customised, providing the flexibility for companies to choose what type of services they require, as well as the duration of that service.

According to Nel, it is crucial that products are serviced and returned to the customer without delay, as they are vital items of emergency equipment that operations cannot afford to be without. While most service parts are stocked on site in the warehouses at the centres, Nel urges customers to alert MSA Africa of their needs as soon as possible.

"Customers enjoy a swift turnaround service if they plan their maintenance well in advance, and make the necessary arrangements with the MSA Africa after-sales service centre. We are able to expedite the requirements of end users on any specific custom configurations if planned in advance. However, unforeseen circumstances do arise and we will always make a plan to accommodate customers to the best of our ability," he continues.

Nel adds that correct operation and proper care of PPE by the user extends service life and reduces the costs of routine maintenance. "Customer training in this regard is offered by the MSA Africa sales team at our headquarters in Johannesburg, but the service team does also assist when necessary."

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### **These gumboots are made for working**

According to a survey undertaken on working professionals in five countries, South Africans spend huge amounts of time at their place of work, with an average of 9,5-hours per day or 47,5-hours per week.

Wayne – part of the BBF Safety Group – is helping its clients to save some precious time by making the selection of gumboots simpler with a new user-friendly catalogue and website.

As a company accredited by the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) 9001, Wayne offers a comprehensive range including gumboots that comply with the European, Australian and South African standards.

The range offers products suitable for a wide range of applications including: agriculture and forestry, food processing and hygiene, general purpose applications and heavy-duty environments.