

Press release:

Excellent service ensures Rand-Air is the supplier of choice in South Africa's dry docks

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Those who have worked in shipyards, harbours and drydocks will be familiar with the pressure and constant urgency, which is exacerbated by frequent delays due to anything from weather to a backlog of vessels awaiting maintenance or repair.

When it comes to corrosion control, it is not something one can simply postpone and do later. The shipping industry's natural environment of saltwater means constant and precise corrosion prevention and maintenance is required.

This is according to Craig Swart, Fleet Manager at Rand-Air, a hire industry stalwart and provider of compressed air and portable power to a variety of industries – including the maritime sector - for the past 46 years.

“Proper corrosion control is therefore vital to every vessel's safety, and its ability to perform at sea. One of the most effective means to remove rust and corrosion from the hull of a ship is through sandblasting,” says Swart, adding that Rand-Air is a longstanding supplier of compressors used for sandblasting in the maritime industry, with fast response times, superior standards of quality and safety, and a depot in close proximity to the docks.

“We understand the importance of corrosion control, as well as the challenges our customers sometimes have to contend with. Customers often cannot tell for sure when a vessel will dock, so we sometimes need to provide equipment a day or two before the vessel actually docks. Weather plays a vital role too - should it rain, the customer cannot continue working - so again, this poses a challenge to operational efficiencies.”

By making it their business to support maritime customers by offering a range of high-quality equipment and personalised service, Rand-Air has become the supplier of choice for many companies in the maritime sector.

“Our maritime customers place great importance on reliability, prompt back-up service and value for money. We work with them to ensure the necessary equipment and service is there when they need it. In addition to compressors for sandblasting, we also provide lighting towers for working at night,” says Swart.

Swart points out that, while typically in the local maritime industry, sandblasting is not done using oil-free air extensively, but rather using filters and moisture traps - possibly due to cost considerations – technically, and in the interests of optimal equipment efficiency and life, 100 % oil-free air is definitely preferable, and recommended, for the following reasons:

- 100% oil-free compressed air, which is a requirement in the maritime environment as any oil residue in the compressed air would contaminate the abrasive and blasted surfaces. Moisture in the abrasive blasting process causes flash rusting on the blasted surface and blast pot clogging. With 100 % oil-free air, blasting equipment efficiency and life is prolonged and equipment maintenance costs are reduced.
- Compressed air volumes from 750 CFM to as high as 1600 CFM or more at 7-10 bar (100-150 PSI) per blasting set up are typically supplied.
- Diesel units are the predominant choice unless the term of the rent and availability of power provide the option for electric-driven ones.

Oil-free compressed air is used throughout industry where the purest compressed air quality is critical to the end-product and to the processes involved.

“As the leading provider of portable power and air solutions in the country, Rand-Air has the right solution for our customers, in that we are able to supply oil-free compressors which have a TUV Class 0 certification under the ISO 8573-1 standard. With this assurance, customers can have peace of mind that they are guaranteed 100% oil-free compressed air,” explains Swart.

In addition to compressor, generator and lighting tower rentals, Rand-Air works closely with its maritime customers to ensure industry best-practice is adhered to. These include special attention to safety, environmental concerns, and security.

According to Swart “Our maritime customers appreciate that we understand their industry. We know that most shipyards and industrial facilities are extremely concerned about any materials that end up on their property. This emphasises the need for spill containment on the rental equipment; as well as electric-driven units where applicable. We also pay close attention to safety and security and ensure that proper identification and check in/out procedures are met.”

With its keen knowledge of the needs of the maritime industry, Rand-Air has built a reputation as the ‘go-to’ supplier when vessels require corrosion control and maintenance.

“We have worked hard to ensure we understand what our customers require in this demanding and fast-paced segment, and we are proud to be first on the list when they need assistance,” Swart concludes.

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(770 words)

Note to editors

About Rand-Air

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With several depots, branches and substantial representation across Southern Africa, Rand-Air continues to expand their footprint to service a diverse market. Since 1973, Rand-Air has been driven by an ethos to exceed customer expectation and satisfaction. This is complemented by a product offering that adheres to the highest quality standards in the industry. Rand-Air's products portfolio includes oil-free compressors, industrial air compressors, diesel compressors, electric air compressors (all screw compressors), diesel generators and lighting towers.

As the market leader in portable air compressors and generator rental, Rand-Air upholds its reputation through regular training and upskilling in business related and product-specific matters.

Rand-Air is part of the Atlas Copco group and is a Level 4 B-BBEE rated company.

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