

Lafarge Plasterboard's SKIPVAC® makes life easier for cleaning teams



Lafarge Plasterboard is making the housekeeping tasks significantly easier to achieve at its Ferrybridge site, thanks to a SKIPVAC.

Lafarge Plasterboard's key priorities include social responsibility, innovation and sustainable development, and so issues like Health & Safety and the working environment are taken seriously at every level throughout every part of the Group. Lafarge Plasterboard's Ferrybridge site is a good example, and it was part of their Keystone project to encourage ideas from the employees that led to a much improved solution for housekeeping and waste management.

Before the SKIPVAC: manual handling issues

Prior to acquiring the SKIPVAC system, the site's Preparation Area required the cleaning teams to deal with all the dust removal by using a vacuum system, but it meant connecting heavy suction hoses to a system at the ground level, and then lugging them up and around each of the five levels of the Preparation Area. With significant quantities of dust on each level, this was not only very hard work, but involved what Cally Bristow, Lafarge Plasterboard's H&S Manager, felt were unnecessary manual handling risks.

So amongst other potential solutions, the Keystone project team looked at a SKIPVAC system and the decision was taken to improve the basic centralised pipework system that had been installed as part of the new plant in 2008. With the SKIPVAC powering the system, the pipework network is now connected to each level of the Preparation Area and has a suitable number of new spurs and strategically placed inlet valves.

Fully enclosed system = no dust exposure

The SKIPVAC comes with a fully enclosed system for handling dust, from nozzle to hopper, and with its highly efficient filtration system, dust is completely contained and easily disposed of wherever required. The SKIPVAC is easily moved around using a forklift, and can be powered from any local 32 amp socket.

Each level of the Preparation Area at Ferrybridge also has its own length of flexible suction hose, and cleaning dust has now become a simple matter of connecting the hose to a suitable inlet valve. With the appropriate nozzle and a special 2" extension from Disab UK, cleaning up and removing the dust build-up from floor areas and nooks and crannies that are awkward to reach, is a simple task. And all this can now be achieved easily and far more efficiently, with no manual handling risks for the operatives concerned.

With the basic pipework system now massively improved, Cally is delighted with the net results:

"The SKIPVAC system's very easy to use, and we're now achieving a much cleaner, better workplace and environment as a result. The employee morale is higher, and they can see a direct benefit from their original submission of the Keystone project to the way they're now working. They've been able to make general regular housekeeping tasks much easier and quicker to fulfil, and are much more willing to do these tasks."

"Thanks to the SKIPVAC and the improvements that have been made to the existing pipework system, we can all see the difference to the working environment, something which our operatives really appreciate. From my H&S perspective, it also minimises the manual handling issues, so I'd say the Keystone project has been very worthwhile"

