

Cropped camera bird's eye view of site

Mindset!

By Ainsley Fraser

Protecting your assets – be that ensuring the health, safety and security of your business, its sites, its equipment and, most importantly, its people, is a first priority. The options are endless... it's the choices you make and how you apply and manage them which make the difference, says Ainsley Fraser.

When SHM asked me to cover off health and safety, fire and theft, detection and security, odour, dust and pest control... and do so in about 1200 words, I thought we should take a step back and look at the why and how, rather than just the what. These are all huge subjects in their own right – but ones which we all have to embrace, understand and completely commit to.

I started by visiting sites and talking to contacts and people in our industry about what they do and how they do it. Very quickly, it became abundantly clear that the people who do it best are those who adopt the whole process as a mindset ... and it doesn't matter whether you are a tiny micro-business, a larger operator, one of the bigger boys or even part of a major group. It's a culture ... a way of business life. It involves every person in the business and a shared understanding and ownership of the responsibilities that go with it. My observation would be also that it appears to work best when it is driven by example from the top – the owner, general manager, regional director – whoever. The person where the buck stops.

So without the need to don the rose coloured spectacles, let's assume that we have a successful waste industry business, with a best industry practice run facility, equipped with all the right stuff to do the job and staffed by well trained competent professional operatives. The common goal is a top class (and compliant) service to the customer, an unblemished safety record, a loyal and contented workforce – all adding up to a profitable business. Add

one more word ... resilience. What happens if there is an emergency or a big, serious incident ... fire, flood – or worse still, a fatality? Is there a robust crisis response procedure – and a disaster recovery plan?

These are all part of the processes and I would have to say that I found plenty of evidence that the industry in general does them all pretty well. There is also a 'second sense' that I came across in well run successful companies – where the management (often the owners) have a real 'feel' for the business – and the people share the senses which go with that culture... what you can see, hear, touch and smell.

Our industry is very fortunate to be served by protection, safety, security and control equipment manufacturers and service providers who make some of the best kit available. Yes, quality sometimes comes at a price, but you get what you pay for. Actually, even some of the mid-range equipment is at least pretty competent – so let's run through some of the realities – and the options.

The first reality is that our beloved waste industry has a reputation for accident risk – just because of what we do. People first. All our people will wear the correct and compliant PPE, won't they – from headgear to footwear, from gloves to hi-vis and protective clothing. They will use it all the time in accordance with proper training and instruction – and it will be regularly inspected and replaced when required. There are specialist suppliers aplenty... just make sure that what you buy is fully compliant. Also check on what you have to pay VAT (see www.gov.uk/government/publications/vat-notice-70123-protective-equipment/vat-notice-70123-protective-equipment). Specification safety boots, hard hats and helmets are VAT zero rated, but some suppliers choose to forget and charge it anyway.

A number of companies I visited have their own health and safety officer on site, to develop and implement procedures and ensure

proper usage and training. At one exemplary company, which runs its own induction and refresher courses, the conversation also included the issue of language. It's a valid concern if non-English speaking people can't read or understand safety instructions – and employment agencies in particular need to recognise their responsibilities in supplying staff into what is a safety critical environment.

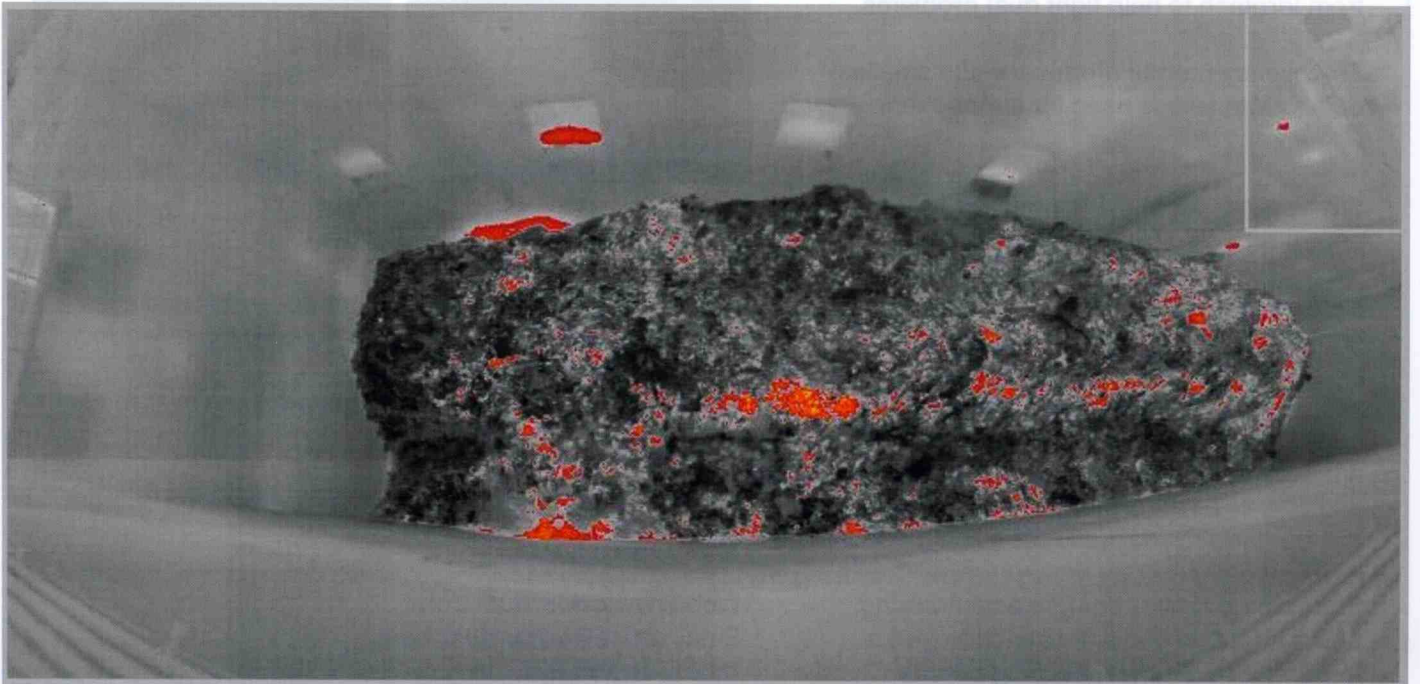
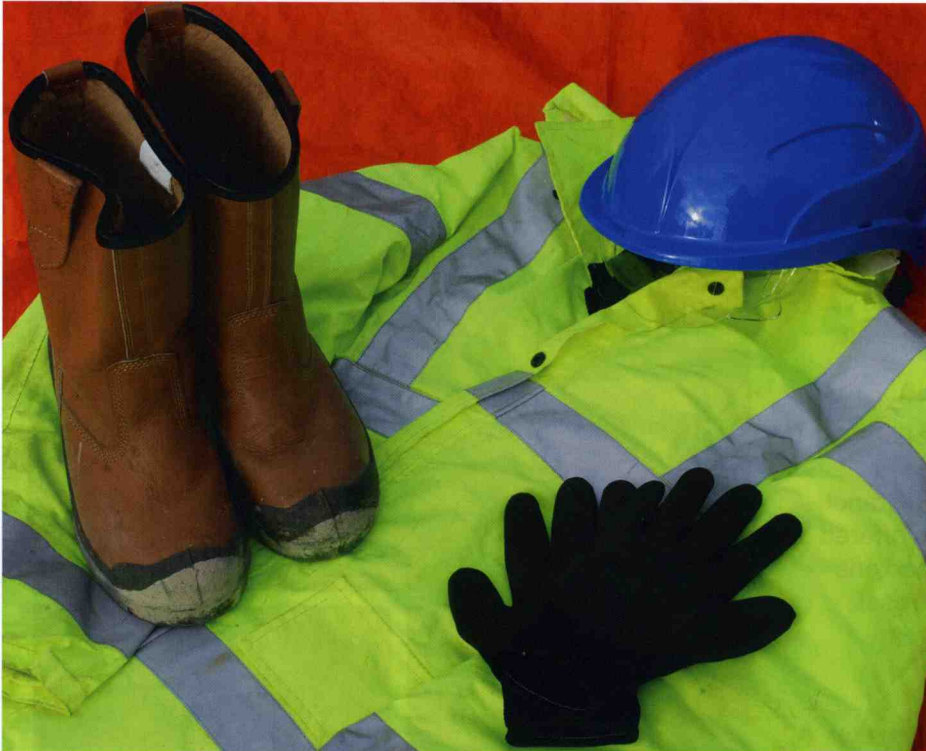
As sorted, separated waste and recycled products attract ever increasing value as 'commodities' in their own right, CCTV surveillance and security on site has never

been more important. Intelligent systems can monitor and track pretty much any area or movement on a site – and relay the information in real time to a central point – and even to the mobile phone of a designated person. Remote access is also quite normal via a laptop or tablet. There are also companies which will provide 'free-for-use (FFU), remote CCTV monitoring if they are engaged on a durable contract basis.

Then there is the risk of fire – an area covered in part in the last issue. Even whilst the Environment Agency's new Fire Protection Plan (FPP) requirements continue to evolve, there is no space or time for delay or complacency. The chilling statistic that 70% of companies that experience a fire either go bankrupt immediately or within the following year may help to explain why many insurance companies now require systems to be in place as a precondition of cover.


There is a range of integrated systems out there which combine highly sensitive IR thermal imaging and video cameras which can pan, tilt and scan materials continuously and automatically respond at the earliest signs of a potential problem. Linked automatic extinguishing, water cannons, foam generators and alarm systems can mitigate risk at any time of the day – but most importantly, at night. The best systems, of course, are not cheap – but some companies offer comprehensive contract leasing and service options. The top end systems use specialist sophisticated software, they monitor even minute changes in temperature and they provide high definition and detailed information about the state of material on site. When it comes to protecting mobile plant and isolated equipment areas, there are self-contained fire suppression

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Thermal image of a waste bunker as viewed through PyroSmart's patented software

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good systems which can deal with the larvae as well as the adults – and before it becomes a major problem.

So finally, dust ... particles, including those which are potentially dangerous and toxic, can travel quite long distances in the wind – so control and containment are the watchwords. Dousing material at source may ground the problem, but it may also saturate the work site and any plant and equipment which may happen to be in the area. There are fixed and mobile fog cannons and misting systems available, for indoor and outdoor applications and the best can effectively create a curtain of droplets across the boundary of the site. To cover a bigger area, several can be set up to work together. Factors such as wind strength and direction are critical in positioning the equipment, but effective management of the problem is far preferable than an enforcement visit which could suspend the operation on the spot.

Mobile fog cannons can control airborne dust on site



systems to choose from – including the ones we looked at in last month's issue. Let's move on.

So it seems that we all 'get it' when it comes to people, fire and security ... but asking about dust, odour and pest control quite often gets a more qualified response. Actually, in some cases, it is almost denial and 'not really a problem' is a common theme. It is, for instance, if your site is close to a residential area or there is food chain activity nearby ... or if you are on an outdoor demolition site or on a dockside, handling bulk material with a potential to create high dust levels. But if you have got the problem, once again there is a host of options available, some more effective than others, depending on what you want to spend.

I came across a lot of talk about 'negative pressure' buildings, particularly at waste transfer stations – be they local authority or contractor operated. They sound great in theory and they may work effectively ... but not when the doors are left wide open to

allow the free movement of vehicles. I tried the doorway feather test at one ... and no, it was not drawn in. Rapid rise and fall 'portcullis' doors are as relevant in the waste industry as they are in chilled storage. Within buildings, there are odour neutralising and fragranced systems which can be effective, but odour control seems to be as much about good site management practice as it is about the installation.

For pest control, rodent bait stations are popular ... but by my observation, a rat is unlikely to rush after any poison when there are 300 tonnes of nice food and residual waste arriving everyday! In the same way, there may be a reluctance to accept spending on fly suppression treatment – particularly in the middle of winter. But do you wait until you have a cloud of flying things and complaints from neighbours before you deal with it? Probably not – when there are some