

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.

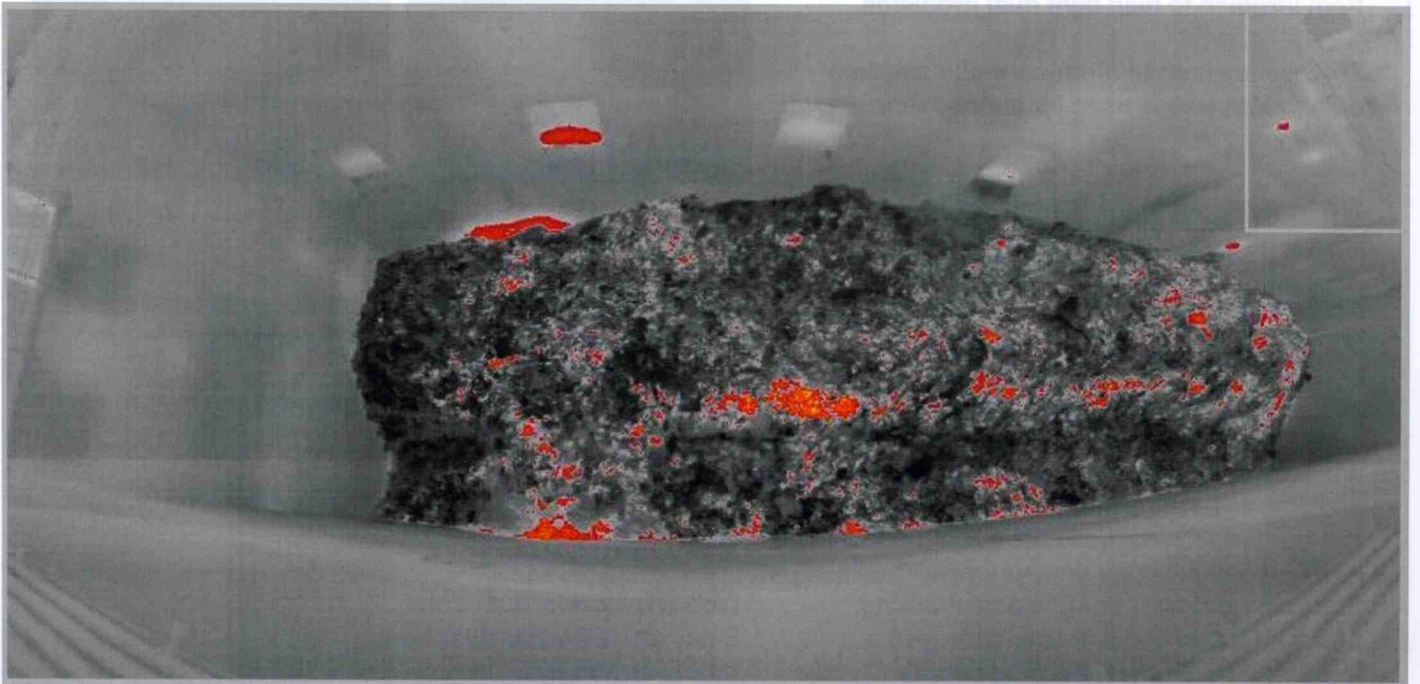
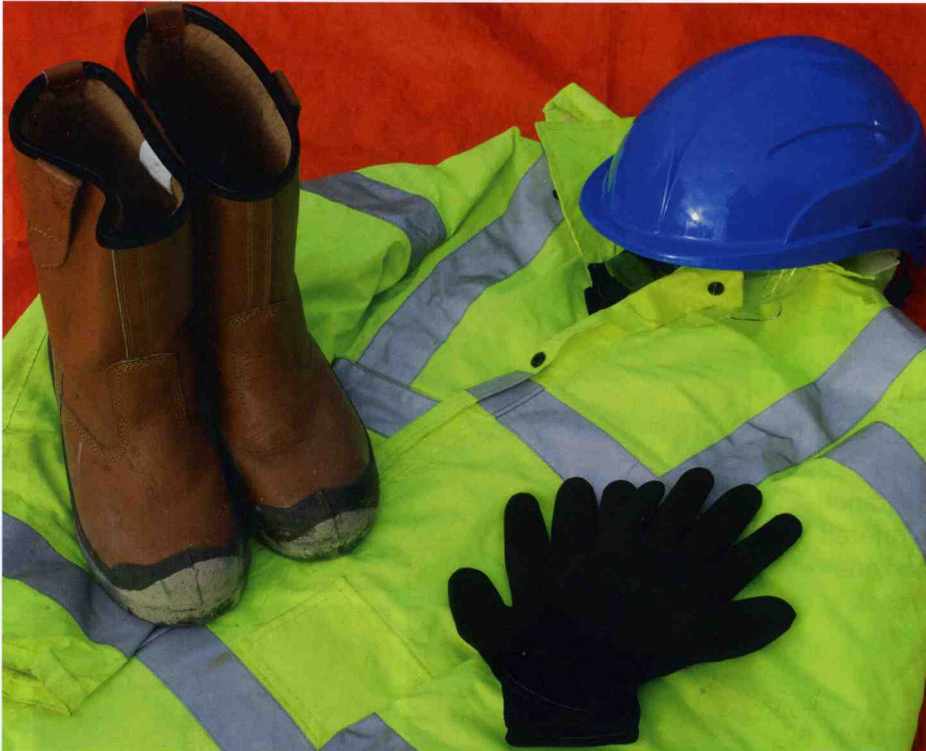
As sorted, separated waste and recycled products attract ever increasing value as 'commodities' in their own right, CCTV surveillance and security on site has never

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

Always wear correct and compliant PPE



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

