

Prevention is better than cure at Safripol

A range of vibration monitoring equipment supplied by advanced machine diagnostics expert, **Engineering Dynamics**, has been instrumental in ensuring that leading plastics manufacturer, Safripol, is able to keep up with high-output demands without causing any unnecessary damage to its machinery.

Safripol's Sasolburg-based factory produces an annual output of 160 000 tons of high-density polyethylene and 120 000 tons of polypropylene for the manufacturing industry, which converts the material into final industrial and consumer plastic products.

In order to ensure that the plant machinery operates at maximum-efficiency in this demanding environment on a 24-hour-basis, Safripol has adopted a 'predictive and preventative' approach to maintenance. Safripol maintenance facility leader Thinus Steyn notes that Engineering Dynamics has been instrumental in assisting Safripol with the vibration monitoring methodology that best suited the company's environment.

"Vibration monitors have replaced the need for technical specialists to be brought to site every time there is a technical fault. This reduces maintenance costs, and improves asset utilisation management, as unscheduled and costly downtime can be easily-prevented," he explains. In addition to providing vibration monitoring equipment, Engineering Dynamics has also assisted Safripol in establishing an equipment condition monitoring (ECM) programme, whereby Safripol employees collect data from the machinery, and send it to Engineering Dynamics for expert analysis.

Engineering Dynamics managing director Christo van der Walt explains: "The ECM programme is best-suited to items of machinery such as extruder gearboxes, which are extremely complex and difficult to analyse on-site. Our service includes carrying out comprehensive analysis on the machinery, and sending back a fully-detailed technical report to Safripol, which ultimately saves the company a significant amount of money each year."

Steyn points out that the ECM programme has replaced Safripol's original equipment manufacturer (OEM) maintenance philosophy with great success. "Since implementing the ECM programme, repair maintenance has become condition-based, meaning that refurbishments are only carried out on a needs-basis, regardless of running hours. This has improved Safripol's asset mechanical reliability (AMR) by approximately 10% over the past five years."

Van der Walt notes that Engineering Dynamics has been supplying Safripol with maintenance equipment since 1995, and the working relationship has grown from strength-to-strength over the years.

"Initially, Safripol purchased one single data collector and a single user software system. Over time, however, the company has continued to purchase a range of vibration monitoring equipment, as well as laser alignment tools and more recently, sensors for the cooling towers at Safripol and cables for a cooling tower fan." Steyn points out that Safripol operates in a highly competitive market and that customer-satisfaction is one of the company's key objectives.

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