

Material Handling MANAGEMENT

Case History: Column Protection

More Than Just Pretty Protection

When it comes to protecting assets in a distribution center, the best protection begins with having “a good set of eyes in the back of your head,” says Joe Messer, technical manager overseeing Tremco Group’s (Beachwood, Ohio, www.tremcoinc.com) capital projects.

Founded in 1928 as a small construction materials manufacturing plant, the Tremco Group today employs over 2,000 people in dozens of locations around the world. Its Roofing and Building Maintenance Division specializes in custom roofing and weather-proofing solutions.

Messer says, “Every facility manager or maintenance supervisor needs to walk through a plant looking for evidence that things are out of control. Ask yourself – ‘Are there bent angle irons, holes in the wall, or loose ripped bollards?’ If you see a problem, ask how it happened and how you can prevent it from happening again.”

It’s that sensibility about looking deeper into the wear and tear on Tremco’s facilities that led Messer to the Column Sentry (Lakewood, Ohio, www.sentrypro.com) protection system for critical beams in Tremco facilities. Column Sentry is a column protection system that saves interior building columns by surrounding them with a column of air. Molded out of low density polyethylene, they have a patented air chamber system that allows air to escape during impact. When Messer first found Column Sentry he immediately appreciated that it would be a trade up from the concrete poured posts Tremco had used in the past.

Now in the midst of the third project using Column Sentry, Messer says, “The Column Sentry protectors are easy to install, easy to maintain, and very forgiving. If you only use concrete posts, there’s a much higher chance of injuring lift trucks or drivers. An added advantage is that they are attractive and their bright yellow color makes them a good complement to the striping and lighting we use to create the visual factory environment.”

“In one plant where we installed the protectors,” he says, “it was for a particular beam that repeatedly suffered the highest impact collisions. The webbing on that beam was ripped. Af-



Column protectors are esthetically pleasing as well as functional in areas of high lift truck traffic.

ter we installed a large protector, it forced the lift truck drivers to make wide turns around the beam. That was several years ago, and although the protector might look a bit dirty because we haven’t washed it yet, it’s certainly still doing the job.

“Most recently we used Column Sentry protection for a new work platform we were building for a new mixer. This was an area of a lot of lift truck traffic. We felt it would be a much less expensive alternative to building a poured concrete post. It’s been 12 months now and though they have absorbed a few hits the protectors are still intact and doing the job.

“When we have Column Sentry in place it becomes very straightforward to find the lift truck operators who need additional training. If the Column Sentry gets marked up from collisions, we know to go back to the lift truck operator and retrain them on the clearance they need to adhere to as they drive the lift truck. In this way, the Column Sentry is an excellent training indicator.”

Messer thinks it’s best to put in the time upfront to do architectural planning for plant designs that could anticipate both the space needed for lift trucks and column protectors. Messer says, “The most common mistake I see is inadequate planning for the real space requirements in a facility. People generally underestimate the protection that a building requires and they fail to plan for Column Sentry type protectors. That’s how you end up with tight spaces where the lift truck operators have no chance of not hitting the building supports. It has to do with faulty space layout and planning in the first place. A safety and hazards analysis upfront will lead people to make choices like outfitting a facility with column protectors.

Messer adds that in the future he plans to ensure that the bright red colored Column Sentry protectors that have cutouts for fire extinguishers are used as well.



SENTRY PROTECTION PRODUCTS, INC.
16927 Detroit Avenue #3 Lakewood, OH 44107
1-888-COLUMN-0 (265-8660) | 1-216-228-3200
www.sentrypro.com | info@sentrypro.com