

SAFETY AND COMFORT FOR FOUNDRY WORKERS

Overview

Ohio Valley Aluminum Company (OVACO) manufactures aluminum billet for the aluminum extrusion industry and has been an industry leader since 1955. OVACO melts down scrap aluminum then pours it into log shapes in order to produce billets for the extrusion business. Its Shelbyville, Kentucky plant uses separate melting and holding furnaces to promote cleaner metal as well as in-line de-gassing for lower hydrogen content and porosity.

The Challenge

Multiple furnaces and a high volume of billet production means that OVACO's manufacturing facility operates at an extremely high level of heat. Temperatures in the pit area sometimes soar to 150 degrees Fahrenheit during the summer months. Corporate Safety Manager Laurie Ireland sought a way of keeping workers in the plant cool and safe. "Previously, we had provided them with Gatorade and ice pops," Ireland says, "but we wanted to enhance their comfort and safety levels beyond that."

The Solution

Ireland sought a technology-based solution to this challenge, one that would be cost-effective, portable for each worker and not interfere with ambient temperatures since heat is a necessity to produce high quality billet. Through an internet search, she learned of Vortec's cooling products and contacted Vortec for further information.



After hearing Ireland describe the environment at her plant, Vortec's experts recommended the combination of Vortec's Personal Air Conditioner (PAC) cooling tube and Diffuse Air Vests. The cooling tube attaches to the back of the vest and blows cool air into the vest to keep users working in hot environments cool and comfortable, allowing them to work longer periods between breaks. The vest can be worn either over or under any other protective clothing that is required. The PAC is connected to a compressed air supply via a compressed air hose. It converts the compressed air into a temperature-adjustable cold air stream that is then blown into the diffuse air vest. The vest is available in three sizes, L - XXL. The temperature of the cold air produced by the PAC is adjustable by the user via a large knob, and allows him to set it to his own comfort level even with gloved hands.

Ireland reports that "the Vortec products did everything they claimed to in their literature. Our workers are more comfortable and happy and we are pleased to have improved conditions for them. And productivity has improved too. Vortec was very informative about their product and offered a good price. They are easy to work with and deliver promptly."



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CASE STUDY: OVACO

Conclusion

OVACO has been using Vortec products for four years. The company's relationship with Vortec may expand in the future, Ireland says. "Given how successful our use of their products has been, I can see ordering more of what Vortec offers. I know they make several types of vests and we may order those at some point." Ohio Valley Aluminum's Corporate Safety Manager says that she has already informed other businesses of the excellence of Vortec's products: "One of our contractors was visiting our site and I gave him one of the vests to wear and let him know who made it. I definitely recommend Vortec. They are excellent to work with."



For more information on Vortec Personal Air Conditioners, [click here](#) or scan this QR code with your smart phone.



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