

Schweizer Group: „No more downtimes – Predictive Monitoring pays off.“

Martin Landwehr is head of maintenance at Schweizer Group, aluminum and die-casting specialist at D-Hattenhofen, located between Stuttgart and Ulm. The company has been using the Predictive Monitoring Service by Keller Lufttechnik for more than a year. In an interview with LUFTREIN editors, Martin Landwehr related his experiences.

LUFTREIN: Mr Landwehr, what is Schweizer Group about? What do they offer?

Martin Landwehr: Schweizer Group specializes in aluminum and magnesium die-casting and is a supplier of series parts for the automotive industry. We employ approx. 1000 people at four sites in Germany, and one each in the Czech Republic, Turkey and China. Here at the headquarter in D-Hattenhofen about 400 people work in our foundry, in CNC processing, and administration of the holding company. We manufacture approx. 12000 aluminum die-cast parts daily in D-Hattenhofen by 10 die-casting centers. The majority of our production is cylinder head covers.

LUFTREIN: Where do you use extraction systems?

Martin Landwehr: There is only one extraction system, a wet scrubber. It controls clean air at the shot blasting plant. All aluminum die-cast parts pass through this shot blasting plant. We intensively use the system. During the week it operates continuously, and sometimes on weekends, as well. This means that it could become our "bottleneck" machine, and its reliability is of vital importance to us. In the event of a breakdown, no parts will exit this stage of production.

LUFTREIN: What is the role of the extraction system?

Martin Landwehr: During operation, the system is equally important as the shot blasting plant itself. If the extraction system does not function, we cannot operate the blasting plant. The only alternative would be to let the parts be shot-blasted by an outside provider. This would result in a significant loss of time and would increase the price by 50%. During any shift in when a system shut down occurs, we lose approx. 3000 Euro. This has actually happened in the past. With worse luck, the problem occurred in the evening. Then, the system was down for 2 shifts until we could resolve the problem. If the ultimate reason for the shutdown was merely a blocked nozzle, I found that highly frustrating.

LUFTREIN: You have been using the Predictive Monitoring Service PREMOS of Keller Lufttechnik for one year now, and have allowed your extraction system to be monitored remotely. What effect did this service have on your operation?

Martin Landwehr: The extraction system has not failed since then. Keller Lufttechnik now monitors any important operating parameters and provides us with an alarm when necessary. The messages display greater urgency as individual measurement values approach the "red zone", which is very helpful.

LUFTREIN: Why are there periodic "alarms" on your extraction systems, and what measures do you take then?

Martin Landwehr: Keller Lufttechnik informs us not only about critical measurement values, their specialists always advise us on what actions to undertake immediately. There are two issues that occur repeatedly: The nozzle of the wet scrubber is blocked and requires cleaning, or the fan has an imbalance because of contamination. We noticed that conscientiousness pays off when we perform a daily minor cleaning and a major cleaning every 14 days. In the meantime, we have an idea of how long the extraction system can continue to operate after an initial alarm. Say the alarm reaches us on a Thursday, and a major cleaning is scheduled for Saturday, a cleaning only is sufficient. This means that we have adequate time to plan our cleaning and maintenance activities so that there are no additional downtimes. This is beneficial for our productivity.

LUFTREIN: Would you recommend PREMOS to other companies?

Martin Landwehr: Yes, I would. It provides a tangible extra value at a fair cost.

LUFTREIN: Thank you very much for this interesting interview, Mr. Landwehr.



For Martin Landwehr, Maintenance Manager at Schweizer Group Hattenhofen, an aluminum die-casting specialist, the system of proactive remote monitoring has already paid off. Since PREMOS has been in use, their separator has not experienced any unscheduled downtimes.