

● PRESS RELEASE

PUTTING A STOP ON BLOCKAGES

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Blockages in a pumping network are a common problem, often resulting in the disruption of flow and the need for costly reactive call-outs to clear impellers. Retroflo's RPC_2000 pump control system includes a unique Pre-Blockage Detection facility that has been designed to combat the traditional problems associated with pumping a non-constant fluid. The results in operation represent a breakthrough in blockage control.

For the water and sewerage sector, ensuring consented flow is a critical part of operations and blockages are a massive concern. Blockages occur in the pumping of any non-constant fluid, such as sewerage, because of the gradual build-up of debris on the pump impellers. Over time this build-up leads to a blockage, which in many cases entails the lifting of the pump from the wet well to carry out maintenance work.

Pre-Blockage Detection is a unique patented function of Retroflo's RPC_2000. The system compares real-time data against benchmarked data to pre-empt blockage situations and implement automated corrective action. Solids build-up on the pump impeller is immediately detected by the RPC_2000 and a self-cleansing sequence is initiated.

Without Pre-Blockage Detection small deposits of debris on an impeller would lead to a much larger build-up and eventually a blockage condition. In the period between the initial deposit and eventual blockage the pumps performance will be compromised, resulting in increased energy costs. The RPC_2000 ensures that the impeller remains debris free and maintains optimum performance.

Another consequence of blockages, and of equal concern for the sector, is the discharge of untreated sewage into the watercourse. This can have a significant environmental impact, and under the Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations of 1994, water companies are subject to tough penalties should it be proven that sewerage pollution was caused by a pumping station not delivering its consented flow.

Bob Dixon, Pumping Station Framework Manager for Northumbrian Water (NWL) has been involved with Retroflo's projects from the outset and understands issues relating to pumping stations better than most. As one of the country's 12 water and sewerage service providers, NWL is investing £380 million in improving the

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REVOLUTIONARY PUMP CONTROL

wastewater network through investment and operational improvements. Retroflo technology is part of this investment.

“We have over 800 pumping stations, many inherited from local authorities, and we undertook a process of identifying what work needed to be done through asset surveys,” explains Bob. “The biggest issues identified were blockages.”

“Prior to installing the system in our Red Row Pumping station, we had hoped for a reduction in blockages,” says Bob Dixon. “Actually, we have virtually eliminated blockages, and we’re not far from completely doing so.”

At Dene House, a mid-sized NWL pumping station on the Northumbrian Coast, the benefits of the Retroflo system are clear to see. Since the system became operational in January 2008 the station log lists a single reactive call-out. During the same period in 2007 the log records 49 call-outs.

Ian Gibson, a Project Manager for contractor Byzak, oversaw the 10-week refurbishment of Dene House, which included installing the Retroflo system to control new pumps and VSDs. Over his 14 years in the water industry Ian has encountered the recurrent problems particular to pumping stations - principally frequent blockages and the resultant maintenance call-outs.

He explains: “The previous firm I worked for had two or three goes at sorting out the problems of troublesome stations - with little success. It’s been good to be involved with this project. Working with Retroflo on a day-to-day basis I’ve seen the benefits of the system at the front-end. To be honest, I can’t see how the industry can ignore it. It’s what has been needed for a long time.”

Retroflo’s system-wide solution is the world’s first to offer pre-blockage detection, consent security, intelligent flushing cycles, periodic efficiency testing and asset data storage, within a single system. The people behind Retroflo believe that the technology they have developed represents a revolution in pump control systems. The impressive figures produced by the RPC_2000 in operation back up these claims.

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RETROFLO PRE-BLOCKAGE DETECTION



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