

Vehicle Airbags: Shredder Operators Have to Be Careful

During the BIR World Recycling Convention & Exhibition in Berlin, organized by the Bureau of International Recycling, the Shredder Committee recommended to improve work safety in shredder plants.

According to board member George Adams Jr. of the US-based SA Recycling, vehicle airbags constituted “a big issue for the shredder industry to worry about” and merited further scrutiny from the safety perspective. “All of us need to be really careful when handling airbags.” He made these comments at the Committee’s meeting on May 30 after having described an incident at his company’s Phoenix facility when an airbag exploded and a metal fragment caused injuries to an employee, including broken ribs and a punctured lung. Employees on the picking belts had since been issued with protective aprons and face shields, he said.

On another safety-related matter, George Adams urged all operators to protect personnel against the threat of flying objects by installing a roof on their shredder plants. Other simpler and less costly options to a roof or full enclosure could include a chainlink barrier. “It doesn’t have to be high end but it could stop someone from getting killed,” he told.

Photo: pixabay



Smart Shredding Systems and Shredder BREF

At the same meeting, Scott Newell III of Newell Recycling Equipment in the USA outlined how Smart Shredding Systems could bring major performance benefits for operators, such as through “minimizing the time periods when the shredder could be shredding but is not” and “minimizing the

effect of operator error”. A computer ran a shredding plant at a high level of efficiency but also “records data and measures as many of the metrics as possible”, he said, before adding: “What gets measured, gets improved.”

Manuel Burnand, who is General Manager of French FEDEREC (Fédération des entreprises du recyclage) and also Chairman of the BIR Shredder Committee, provided the audience with an update on the development of an EU best available techniques reference document (BREF) for shredders. The position of the European Recycling Industries’ Confederation (EuRIC) was that emission levels in the current draft of the document did not appear to be based on a representative sample of plants and that the high monitoring frequencies proposed “would significantly increase operational costs without any added environmental benefit”. The next draft of the Shredder BREF could emerge by the end of 2016, according to Manuel Burnand.