

User report

More safety on the “materials highway”

Siemens facility managers rely on Efaflex high-speed doors with Active Crash System

One of the most important tasks of logistics is transport. No matter whether from the manufacturer to the customer or within the works: transport requires a well developed and efficient traffic infrastructure. Particularly in the field of logistics, this means again: Time is money. Nevertheless, the safety of our employees must not be neglected. The Siemens electronics plant in Amberg has successfully solved this task. Efaflex high-speed doors ensure a smooth materials flow there as well as high safety for the employees.

“This is our materials highway”, Martin Schönthaler explains. He is responsible for 70 employees in facility management and the appertaining workshops in the Siemens plant. The certified engineer looks into the 400-metre corridor which constitutes a connecting road within the plant building. “From the receiving area to the production department, from there to the next halls and then on to the shipping area lock: This central road is where the entire material and goods transport within our works takes place.” 17 forklift trucks and quite a number of electric vehicles are going from hall to hall as a central supply element – 24 hours a day. A road without obstacles would be the ideal. “But this would not be possible since our employees would constantly have to work in draft air”, explains Norbert Ramesch, responsible for constructions and outdoor installations.

Therefore, one tried to take remedial measures already years ago by installing swing gates. These swing doors had, however, quite a number of disadvantages. Disastrous draft air, especially during winter time, occurred whenever forklift trucks passed the doors. Air-conditioning generated overpressure which resulted in the door wings standing open. The hanging yellowed early and became non-transparent which constituted an increased accident hazard. Light loadings ran the risk of being moved or thrown down by the door wings. Martin Schönthaler

and his employees therefore searched for a better and safer solution. They needed robust doors which can quickly open and close up to 1,000 times a day. And they must not present any danger for pedestrians, who also use this road. It was necessary to maintain a constant temperature of 23 degrees Celsius in particular in the shipping area without losing too much heating energy.

It was not very difficult for the planners to decide for Efaflex doors. Now, 30 different products of the door specialist from Bruckberg in Lower Bavaria have already been installed at Siemens in Amberg. 14 of them are turbo roll-up doors. "Efaflex products are not cheap but the price-performance ratio is correct", says Norbert Ramesch. The new doors have a supporting effect on the day-to-day business of Siemens. With an opening speed of 3.6 m/sec, they are fast enough in order to ensure smooth traffic flow. Forklift trucks do not have to slow down anymore. Changes of the indoor climate could be compensated. The doors close with a speed of 1.0 m/sec. The door blade consists of blue polyester material which is stabilised by aluminium bars. Round spirals make sure that the door curtains are taken up quickly and without contact. The transparent laths are not scratched or polluted when they are wound up into the spiral. This increases the general operating safety on the central driveway.

Five of the doors which have a size of 2,800 x 3,000 mm each are equipped with an Active Crash System (ACS). A crash-out device for the lower door leaf area, active on both sides, minimises damages to the door which could be caused by vehicles. "Up to now, this safety device has not been triggered yet. This means that the doors work very well. Our concept is perfect.", Schönthaler proudly says. "It is absolutely indispensable that this technology works properly and without failure on our materials highway. We cannot afford any weak spots at this critical spot in our works. Processes in a factory must be predictable." As far as safety is concerned, Martin Schönthaler and his colleagues also had other important aspects to take into consideration. Fire doors are installed between the individual parts of the building. The technicians had to make sure that the iron bulkheads and the high-speed doors do not impair each other in their functionality. In escape situations it is important as well that the doors can also be opened if they

are currentless. “When it comes to the safety of our employees, we must not leave out anything in the planning”, says Schönthaler.

Door failures are avoided from the beginning by targeted maintenance work which is carried out by employees of the works infrastructure. The employees themselves have access to parts for minor repairs. These parts are stored in their own warehouse. If a door gets nevertheless stuck or if there is a safety risk for employees, Schönthaler is not willing to argue: Efaflex customer service has to become active immediately. The quick reaction to problems and immediate and joint approaches to problems are important aspects in the cooperation between Siemens and Efaflex, explains Martin Schönthaler. “We feel being in goods hands when we are taken seriously. And if we then also have a well tried-and-tested supplier, we are quite insistent as customer. We always come back.”

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