

CONVEYOR E-NEWSLETTER

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FLOSTOR ENGINEERING

FloStor is the leading Hytrol Solutions Provider on the West Coast. FloStor offers next-day shipping on 50 conveyor models in over 2500 sizes from their California Stockyard.



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Ten things to know before installing your new conveyor system

Answering these questions up front will alleviate unforeseen problems and assure a trouble-free conveyor installation.

Once you have specified and selected the new conveyor for your facility, it's time to begin the installation process. Installing a system involves a lot more than simply bolting down a few sections and plugging it in. There are a number of important considerations that you, as the customer, should discuss with your integrator or installer long before the equipment is even ordered.

"Every installation is different," says Howard Dietz, senior project manager at Werres Systems of Frederick MD. "You need to have open lines of communication between the customer and the installer. We like to think of our customers as partners in the installation, and wish for them to be involved in the entire process," he says.

Typically, the installer will make a site visit to the facility as soon as possible after the design has been completed. That way any potential problems that may affect equipment selection and eventual installation can be dealt with early on.

New facilities make for much easier installs, as they are usually designed with the equipment in mind. Sometimes, however, the drawings do not always match reality. This makes a site visit imperative.

Existing facilities present other potential problems, most of which are addressed in the questions that follow. Each of these should be discussed in detail with your installer.

If the installation is for an existing facility, does the work need to be done while the building is operating?

Dietz says that about 70% of his installs

are work around people and other equipment. When possible, he attempts to perform the install during off-peak shifts. He also tries to avoid the customer's busy seasons.

Are any modifications necessary to the building?

If modifications are needed, identify who is responsible for them. Also, if the conveyor has to run through existing walls, determine the composition of the walls - concrete, plaster, or brick.

How will the equipment be unloaded at the building?

Determine beforehand who is responsible for unloading the conveyor system when it arrives - the installer or workers at the facility. Other factors to consider include the distance from the dock to the installation location, and the availability of dock levelers for unloading. If the equipment has to go to an upper or lower level, is there an elevator or floor access? Is there a staging or storage area for equipment until it is ready to be moved into place, or does delivery need to be timed to coincide with exact install dates?

Does any old equipment need to be disassembled and removed?

If so, determine who will do the dismantling and where the old equipment should go - to another facility, to storage, or sold.

Are there any obstructions in the building that require installers to work around them?

Identify sprinkler systems, ductwork, pipes, and similar obstacles that might be in the way of where the conveyor is supposed to run.

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Do electric welders need to be used?

Some facilities require electric welders rather than propane-based welding.

Does the facility have adequate power and compressed air to operate the conveyor

Determine if there are power and air drops in the correct places for all parts of the conveyor system. And if they aren't available, decide who is responsible for adding these.

Is the ceiling appropriate for suspending a system?

Determine the characteristics of the ceiling. Can it handle the weight of a suspended conveyor? Is the ceiling made of steel, concrete, or wood? Must insulating material be penetrated before reaching the ceiling? Do ceiling beams and trusses run east-west or north-south? How is the conveyor to be attached and have load points been determined? Should clamps, hangers, or bolts be used? Are there adequate clearance heights?

Are any permits required for the installation?

Know what local codes require and who is responsible for obtaining the permits.

Does the install require a union crew?

Customers have various labor requirements depending on their union contracts. Lastly, Dietz asks his customers for a list of their key personnel and phone numbers. He encourages the participation of customer representatives, especially maintenance people, when the equipment is put in place.

"If the customer has their people involved in the system installation it promotes acceptance and better understanding of the new system," he says. "It is to their benefit to be there."

