

Yankee Fiber Control Inc.

Insight, Innovation, Integrity. Yankee Ingenuity at Work.

Innovation is not something that usually comes to mind when thinking about the asbestos abatement industry, but Yankee Fiber Control Inc. of East Providence, R.I., is a striking exception. Founded in 1984, the company continually searches for new, less costly methods of removing asbestos for a variety of clients.

In fact, Yankee's expertise in asbestos abatement has led to an expansion of services into surface cleaning and preparation and an adjunct business, Yankee Surface Technologies. In addition to asbestos abatement, the two Yankee entities offer lead abatement, mold remediation, industrial cleaning, industrial coating services, air-duct cleaning, shot blasting, dust-free demolition, ultra-high-pressure water jetting, and polished concrete flooring.

On the cutting edge

One of the company's most notable accomplishments is the development of a robotic device that removes coatings as hard as epoxy using ultra-high-pressure water jets. The lawnmower-sized machine was used on an assignment at a power plant in Norwalk, Conn., where it crawled along a vertical wall of an eight-million-gallon oil storage tank blasting off a coating of lead paint with its rotating ultra-high-pressure water nozzles. With this surface-cleaning technique, water is recaptured and the paint filtered out so that no lead enters the environment.

It's a cheaper and safer alternative to sand blasting, according to Ron Gagnon, the company's vice president. "Sand blasting would have created more than 750,000 pounds of hazardous waste," he says. The water jet method, by contrast, creates just 10,000 pounds of waste. "That results in a big savings in hazardous waste disposal costs," he says. In addition, the need for scaffolding and enclosures to capture sand and paint chips that would be required with sand blasting is eliminated, saving many man-hours of labor.

The robotic cleaning device was the result of years of research and development. Yankee partnered with an engineer who had been working on the technology. Some of the company's employees have engineering backgrounds, and they worked with the engineering consultant to tailor the device for their needs.

The company's use of other cutting-edge technologies has helped it earn challenging assignments

at sensitive sites. At a U.S. Navy submarine base in New London, Conn., for example, the company used a system employing dry ice pellets to remove lead paint from the interior of a building. Dry ice pellets are used as a blast media to remove lead paint. Since the pellets sublime (convert from a solid to a gas) upon impact, there is no added hazardous waste stream that sandblasting would have generated.

The company has also adapted blast cleaning techniques for special uses. For instance, it used crushed walnut shells as the medium in sand blasting to remove lead paint in the interior of a historic mill building to prevent excessive damage to the interior surfaces. "Nobody is more mechanized than us," Gagnon says. "We're always looking for better systems and alternatives."

Expanded services

In recent years, the company has developed a sizeable business providing polished concrete flooring, a service stemming from asbestos abatement. Tasked with removing asbestos flooring, the company had to develop techniques to remove mastics that adhere tiles to concrete. Yankee puts that know-how to use today on polished concrete flooring assignments.

A recent project in Plymouth, Mass., the Market at Pine Hills, was a showcase for this type of flooring. "We put down a beautiful caramel, burnt-sienna color," Gagnon says. Polished concrete is becoming more popular for retailers, commercial properties, and even some residences due to its low cost, easy maintenance and sustainable qualities. The material helps projects achieve Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) certification because it saves on resources — no carpeting, wood or other additional flooring is necessary.

Yankee Fiber Control Inc. has seen such growth in services and work due to the dedication of its 50-plus workforce, according to company officials. "Our success is dependent on our workforce," says Jim Hutzler, president. "We don't have a revolving door and our employees' ideas are always welcome."

Contact Yankee Fiber Control to see how it can help turn your next project into a success.

— Success Story



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