CASE HISTORY

SonicAire Makes Dust Control a Breeze for Boat Manufacturer

"In the boat building industry, the biggest challenge with dust control is from processing large parts and molds," reports Jeff Staub, Special Projects Manager for Viking Yachts.

This industry-leading manufacturer produces 90 percent of each semi-custom boat in house. That generates a lot of dust.

"We have wood and fiberglass dust," says Staub, who also has company responsibility for environmental compliance. "The wood dust stems from our Mill department, which fabricates our furniture and cabinetry. And our boats are made from fiberglass reinforced plastic, so a majority of the dust generated is from sanding and grinding of those materials."

Staub admits, "When working with these parts, traditional dust collection methods are not always effective and can result in increased housekeeping."

What did Viking Yachts do to improve their dust control measures?

"We've worked closely with the engineers at SonicAire to develop customized layouts for industrial dust control fans at Viking Yachts. Their staff is knowledgeable and dedicated to meeting our needs. Each target area of our facility has unique characteristics, and SonicAire has addressed the differences in operations and building designs. Using their fans helps keep the housekeeping on the ground where it is easier, cheaper and ultimately safer to clean than high surfaces."

Viking started with a pilot of four fans in the fiberglass production area, to test their effectiveness. The results were impressive. Staub notes, "We have since expanded the program into our wood mill and R&D areas, by adding 13 more fans. And we have plans to expand the coverage to other areas of the facility soon."

Five-fold Improvement

Since installing SonicAire fans, Viking Yachts has benefited from five areas of improvement at their facility.

1. Reduced Cost

Before fans were installed, Viking outsourced the cleaning of high surface areas to outside vendors. "Some of our ceilings are 50 feet high," says Staub. "Typically, we contracted with a cleaning supplier after a certain amount of accumulation had been identified." This helped Viking manage the cost by limiting capital expenditures for equipment and also reduced their liability. However, the process was still expensive and time consuming.

Staub explains, "It took crews five months to work through the facility. In addition, cleaning once the dust has already accumulated is not the most effective management strategy. SonicAire has developed a product that can reduce the frequency of cleaning or in some cases, prevent the dust from ever accumulating."

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2. Reduced Downtime

Manual housekeeping of high surface areas at Viking was highly disruptive to production. Even with crews working at night, there was significant time allocated to moving parts and molds to provide access. “We figured if we could eliminate or extend the time between cleanings, there is a definite savings in logistics labor,” says Staub.

3. Reduced Risk

“There are a lot of variables that contribute to combustible dust events,” notes Staub, “but if you can find a way to control one or more of those contributing factors, you can reduce the risk of an event. Managing the dust accumulation levels is one way to reduce that risk—and the SonicAire fans are a good tool to do that.”

4. Increased Morale

“Employees like the idea that their work areas are safer and ultimately cleaner,” reports Staub. “They have made comments that they appreciate seeing the company take initiative to reduce these risks versus allowing dust to accumulate before cleaning.”

5. Increased Compliance

Staub notes that managing dust accumulation with SonicAire fans allows Viking Yachts to better comply with the requirements of state fire codes. He adds, “An added benefit is that our insurance company likes the results!”

“Immediate Results”

It didn’t take long for Viking Yachts to start reaping the benefits of SonicAire fans. Staub reports, “With SonicAire fans, it is immediately noticeable that high surfaces—where dust previously accumulated quickly—are clean.”

The SonicAire Solution

As the global leader in dust control, SonicAire partners with manufacturers to mitigate risk and create cleaner environments. Applying proprietary BarrierAire™ technology, SonicAire uses thermal-current control and high-velocity airflow to prevent dust accumulation. The fans offer an engineered, robotic solution to control overhead dust and reduce housekeeping costs, while maintaining safe, compliant conditions.

Each industrial dust control fan system is customized to meet the needs of individual facilities. Contact SonicAire to receive a personally engineered solution and quote.

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> – Jeff Staub, Special Projects Manager, Viking Yachts

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