WHAT PLANT MANAGERS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CHEMICAL DOSING SYSTEM HIRE

Process and manufacturing businesses using chemical dosing systems will naturally invest in their own equipment, but there are times when hiring becomes a welcome additional option. WES Group, a leader in the development and application of dosing technology, offers plant managers the following advice on why, when and how a hired system can answer their problems. This is followed by guidance on what to look for in a provider.

We should never underestimate the importance of chemical dosing. Delivering chemicals precisely, consistently and controllably is vital to quality maintenance, cost management, safety and regulatory compliance. For this, the manager needs a dosing system which matches the plant's operational needs, performs effectively and goes on working, reliably, day after day. In some circumstances, the existing system may fall short of those expectations.

Short-term or longer-term hire can rescue the situation when:
The site's dosing equipment suddenly stops working. A hired system, deployed in such an emergency, keeps the plant's operation moving and gives engineers time to investigate and resolve the problem. This is especially important for processes where extended stoppages would critically affect production or compliance.

A planned shutdown of the site's dosing system is necessary for plant maintenance, refurbishment, upgrading or expansion. Again, hiring avoids interrupting the operation.

Testing and evaluation is needed on new strategies and processes designed to meet more stringent regulations and reduce operating costs. Before spending on new equipment, it makes sense to conduct tests and field trials using a hired system to find out whether the proposed changes will be effective, and to ensure the permanent equipment solution is properly specified.

Operational requirements and levels of demand are subject to seasonal or other short-term variations. Hired equipment adds flexibility, allowing rapid and cost-effective adaptation of site capabilities.

It is time for the plant to be upgraded or replaced, but the company's capital expenditure budget is insufficient. Dosing equipment hire reduces the cost to a comparatively low monthly payment which falls within the operating expenditure budget. Another approach is

to use a hired system to gain time until the necessary capex is available.

The company's in-house availability of knowledge, skills and capacity for installing and maintaining dosing equipment is limited or overstretched. A specialist provider can supply a standalone hired system, specified, engineered, tested and ready to install – and manage the installation, commissioning and maintenance if required.

How to choose a supplier

Plant managers should look for the following assurances from a supplier, if the cost-effectiveness and other advantages of hiring are to be maximised.

1. Proven expertise and a comprehensive equipment and services portfolio. Ideally, an awareness of the special needs of the particular industry sector.

2. Systems which match the plant's scale, procedures and supply chain. Chemical supply, storage and dosing requirements vary enormously between sites and processes. System sizes range from small units to large set-ups with tank capacities up to 20 m3. Filling may need to be via drum, IBC or tanker.

3. Easy adaptation of systems to the plant's operational needs. Versatility is essential. For example: the turndown ratio of the pumps supplied must meet the plant's variable flow and pressure ; the pumps, valves and pipework must be compatible with the chemicals used; and the equipment should allow simple setting and adjustment of timing and dosage parameters.

4. Rapid availability of equipment. In breakdown situations, especially, there must be confidence that the system will

be operating on site very soon. This is largely a question of the provider's fleet size and the efficiency of its logistics.
5. Easy transport, installation and commissioning of systems. The right provider will do everything possible to ensure equipment is operational in the shortest time. It should be palletised or containerised for fast transport, with a construction robust and weatherproof enough for deployment in any location, and its components should be pre-integrated and pre-tested. A large tank, for instance, should come with filling and safety systems in place, and the package should include a suitable bund.

6. Ability to integrate equipment quickly and easily with that on site. Systems should arrive with the right pipework and connectors for a straightforward link to existing dosing lines, where appropriate, or to the lines supplied with it. There should be a choice between independently operating controls and linkage to existing sensors and on-site or remote control systems.
7. Expert and dependable advice. Unless there is sufficient in-house knowledge of exactly what system is required, and how to install and maintain it, the manager must be able to trust in the provider's advice and support.

8. A reputation for flexibility, responsiveness and good service. There should be an established record of fulfilling customers' needs in both emergency and planned situations.

The development of WES Group's hire service, which specifically addresses each of the criteria above, has benefited from many years of researching the issues affecting customers.

For further information, please visit www.wes.ltd.uk.