

Bearing your share of jobsite washwater disposal

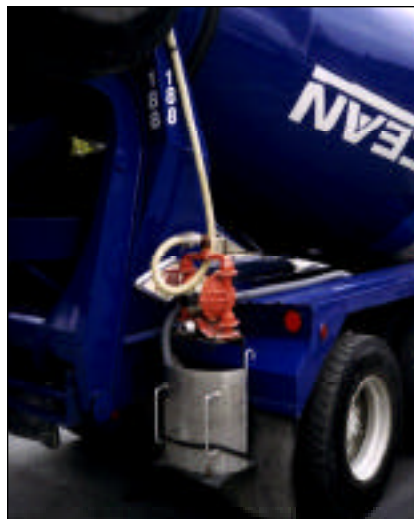
Designed by a producer, this self-contained truck-chute washing system meets demanding Canadian waste-disposal laws

Canadians take their environmental stewardship responsibility seriously, especially when it comes to protecting their fishing industry. While the stringent anti-pollution laws were initially enacted to deal with other industries, enforcement agents now apply them to the simple act of washing down a ready-mix truck chute.

While negotiating the supply contract for a high-profile project in 1997, Ron Lankester, vice president and general manager of Ocean Construction Supplies' Concrete Division in Vancouver, British Columbia, realized drivers needed a simple washdown system. The contractor insisted that Ocean was to supply a watertight disposal bin drivers would use for chute rinsing. Lankester avoided having to supply the disposal container but recognized that the contractor's demands for his contribution toward jobsite disposal costs would only increase the next time.

Lankester gathered a team of managers and drivers to find a solution that would be relatively inexpensive and easy to use. The team developed the Envirowash Chute Rinse System.

The system includes a bucket-shaped container the driver attaches to the truck chute's last connecting hook. The container holds a removable screen that retains stone particles. The rinse water, along with the sand and cement particles, passes through the screen and into the lower half of the bucket. An air-operated diaphragm pump then pumps the water into the mixer drum. The slurry can either be used in the next load or discharged into the recycling system back at the plant. The driver places the stone particles on the stock-



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pile upon returning to the plant.

The key to the system was finding the right pump. "We went through several different pump styles and manufacturers before we found one that could withstand the abrasive washed material," says Pat Heale, Ocean's operations manager. In fact, Heale says the current kit's pump is specially modified to reduce wear problems.

A mechanic should be able to install the kit in about an hour, says Marv Barry, Ocean's maintenance manager. Also, at less than 60 pounds, it doesn't add much weight to the truck's payload.

Little additional driver training is required, and Ocean managers report that most drivers welcome the system. Company rules mandate that all drivers use the system on each load.

The system has saved people from paying fines. Just after Ocean installed a system on a semi-trailer mixer, two fisheries officers stopped the driver just as he was about to start the cleaning procedure. He had parked the truck near a storm sewer inlet. Both officers thought they had caught a polluter red-handed but ended their shift impressed with the invention. The officers told Ocean managers they were delighted that the producers had shown their commitment to the environment by adding the units on all of their trucks.

—Rick Yelton

Ocean Construction Supplies Ltd. is now marketing its invention to other producers. The kit, which contains the pump, an air regulator, two hoses, and the aluminum containment screen, costs about \$1,000. Phone 604-261-2211 or e-mail rlankester@tilbury.lehighcement.com to learn more details.

Top: The Envirowash Chute Rinse System uses an aluminum containment hopper and an air-operated pump to transfer waste residue from the chutes into the mixer's drum for at-plant disposal. Bottom: During transit, the rinse system can be stored away from the action.