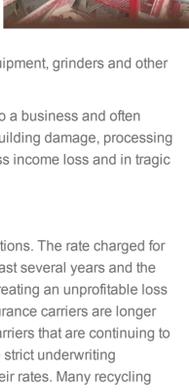


Managing Fire Risk in Recycling

By John Schumacher



Most recycling business owners understand that fires have become a major concern in the industry. Some segments of recycling have a greater frequency of fire, but virtually all recycling streams have experienced fire loss. In the past 12 months there have been more than 342 reported fires in the waste and recycling industry. (Source: Ryan Fogelman, Fire Rover)



The specific cause of the fires varies and due to the degree of damage, often left to some degree of speculation. The more common causes include; lithium-ion batteries, electrical fires and equipment heat generation. Losses have occurred with buildings, material piles, heavy equipment, grinders and other processing equipment.

Fires can be one of the most devastating losses to a business and often trigger multiple insurance coverages protecting building damage, processing equipment, machinery, saleable material, business income loss and in tragic cases, workers compensation.

Insurance Market

Property insurance carriers are for-profit organizations. The rate charged for property insurance has been quite low over the past several years and the claims payout during that period has increased creating an unprofitable loss ratio for insurance carriers. As a result, many insurance carriers are longer offering coverage in the recycling industry. The carriers that are continuing to offer coverage in the recycling industry, now have strict underwriting requirements and have dramatically increased their rates. Many recycling businesses that have had fire losses or cannot demonstrate good fire prevention controls, are not being offered renewals at any premium level.

How to Manage Rising Insurance Cost

Property insurance rates have risen dramatically and continue to rise. Recycling operations with a perceived lower risk of fire loss will receive more favorable terms from insurance underwriters. The term "recycling" can be considered in broad terms by many insurance underwriters. However, different recycling operations will have different risk profiles and likelihood to experience a fire loss. Because of this, it is very important that recycling business owners work closely with their insurance broker to educate underwriters about their operations and any specific fire prevention activities that are employed at their location. Quite often, this can be the difference of obtaining a property insurance quote at any price. Industry best practices for fire prevention must also be known and put into practice at the recycling businesses. Below are some of the more common fire prevention best practices.

Fire Risk Management - Operational Controls

Material Management: Maintaining separation of material piles to limit the spread of fire both inside and outside of the recycling facility. Storage of exterior material piles far enough from the building structure to avoid involving the building in the event of a fire in the material pile.

Tipping Floor Controls: Utilizing dedicated personnel to manage prohibited material from entering the MRF is essential. Establish a response plan to fire or hot load is important to minimize the spread of fire and damage.

Fire Watch: Often associated with hot work, the application here is related to day-to-day operations. Provide fire watch for at least 60 minutes after the last load into transfer station / tipping floor. Also, provide fire watch for at least 60 minutes after shutdown of recycling plant. The fire watch personnel should have access to basic fire extinguishers and also understand how to rapidly report any fire identified to local fire department.

Hot Work Permits: Associated with any welding, cutting and related hot work for equipment installation and maintenance. A written policy enforced for internal and contractor work in addition to a formal fire watch policy with fire protection.

Equipment Preventive Maintenance: Some fires are sourced from malfunctioning equipment that creates hot areas that can ignite dust or recycling materials. A formalized PM program for all processing equipment and heat-producing equipment is required. This program is typically in place from an operations efficiency perspective but has a direct impact on fire prevention.

Thermal Imaging: A method of regular imaging of equipment to identify hot running equipment and parts that utilizes specialized heat sensing detectors. Newer recycling plants may have some heat detection integrated. This is often part of an equipment preventive maintenance program.

Dust Management: Any recycling operation creates dust. Material in a dust form is highly combustible and easily ignited. A regular clean up schedule to minimize accumulation of dust on equipment, surfaces or hot surfaces.

Smoking Controls: A standard policy at most recycling facilities. To be effective, the policy must have strict enforcement of no smoking and designated smoking areas to prevent "sneak smoking" and careless discard of butts.

Heavy Equipment Fire Protection: Preventive maintenance to minimize the potential for hydraulic line failure and other mechanical breakdowns that can lead to a fire. Cleaning of dust and debris from hot areas of equipment will greatly reduce fire risk. Park equipment in areas that will not expand fire if the equipment would have a fire.

Fire Risk Management Prevention / Suppression Systems

Automatic Sprinkler System: Must be designed for the fire risk associated in the building. Regular maintenance by qualified contractors including flow tests, pump chum and related is essential. Maintain sprinkler head clearance and cleanliness to ensure sprinkler heads can respond to heat and provide the water spread as designed.

Duct Fire Suppression Systems: Dust collection and grinder units with duct collections systems are very susceptible to fires within the duct work or bag house. Many systems are available to detect heat and provide fire suppression within the duct work.

Fire Rover: A commercially available system with specific application to the waste and recycling industry. Applied to higher fire hazard areas of a recycling facility.

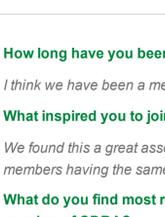
Water Deluge / Water Cannon Systems: As a supplement to an automatic sprinkler system, water deluge or water cannon systems can be very effective. Typically designed for specific areas of a processing plant where automatic sprinkler systems have limited impact.

Fire Brigade: Utilizing trained employees and various firefighting equipment to control small fires until professional fire fighting crew arrives. Must be done in close cooperation with local fire service. This method increases risk to employees and must be evaluated.

Fire Department Collaboration: An essential element of a fire risk management program that includes evaluation of fire risk, fire fighting strategies and prevention methods.

Managing fire risk will require multiple approaches and will vary by recycler. It is a real problem in the industry that requires a strategic and ongoing approach. Recyclers are wise to invest in solutions and become well informed of the issues, technology and collaborate with industry groups to be in the best position to avoid fire loss and manage insurance costs.

Besides serving as Chair of the CDRA Risk Management Committee, John Schumacher is an insurance and risk management professional with Assurance Agency. He can be reached at 847.463.7224 or jschumacher@assuranceagency.com.



March 11, 2020
Las Vegas, NV

Co-located with ConExpo-Con/Agg



Get Your ConExpo-Con/Agg Badges Through CDRA

The CDRA will again co-locate C&D World 2020, its Annual Meeting, on March 11 during the huge ConExpo-Con/Agg show March 10-14, 2020 in Las Vegas. **Registration is now open!**

As always, attendees to Las Vegas World will get badges to enter the equipment exhibition at the Las Vegas Convention Center, which is truly a sight to be seen. And attendees to C&D World will be treated to an excellent half-day program, the exciting fundraiser, as always, as well as room rates - reduced from what one can get from the show. So please make your plans now to have C&D World as part of your Las Vegas itinerary.

If you are not able to make C&D World but still want to go to ConExpo-Con/Agg, reduced rate exhibit hall badges can be purchased through the CDRA. More information will be coming out in the next 2 months.

Also, the CDRA will be sponsoring select education sessions at ConExpo/Con-Agg and can provide reduced rates to all sessions at the big show.

For example, CDRA members will have this pricing for:

- \$95 until January 17, 2020
- \$149 until March 9, 2020
- \$179 during CONEXPO-CON/AGG show days

Additionally, CDRA members will be eligible to register for educational sessions at a discounted rate as follows:

- \$495 for an all-session pass with USB recording
- \$345 for an all-session pass
- \$175 for a single-day pass
- \$59 per single session

Register Now!

CDRA to Exhibit at NDA Annual Meeting

Join us for three days of networking and education for the demolition industry at Demolition Austin, the National Demolition Association's Annual Convention and Expo. Taking place February 22-25, 2020 in Austin, Texas, Demolition Austin will feature in-depth education sessions and the favorite 15-minute "Fast and Furious" presentations; opportunities to network with your peers and industry vendors; and the return of the Live DEMOLITION event where you can test equipment in real-time. Use Demolition Austin to gain the knowledge and industry updates you need to advance and strengthen your demolition business.

In 2019, we had more than 1,000 demolition professionals from across the country join us for Demolition Rockies and welcomed 89 exhibitors in the Expo. We look forward to building on this success in 2020. Exhibits sales have opened, and for more information on how to exhibit, please contact Ryan Leach, rleach@demolitionassociation.com. For more information on Demolition Austin, go to <https://www.demolitionassociation.com/Education-Events/Demolition-Austin>.

2020 International Biomass Conference & Expo

February 3-5, 2020

Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center

Nashville, TN

Organized by BBI International and produced by Biomass Magazine, this event brings current and future producers of bioenergy and biobased products together with waste generators, energy crop growers, municipal leaders, utility executives, technology providers, equipment manufacturers, project developers, investors and policymakers. It's a true one-stop-shop: the world's premier educational and networking junction for all biomass industries.

Learn More

CDRA Member Spotlight: Walter Biel

How long have you been a member of CDRA?

I think we have been a member for 3 years.

What inspired you to join CDRA?

We found this a great opportunity to be involved in, with its members having the same passion about recycling.

What do you find most rewarding about being a member of CDRA?

It's our livelihood and we love the challenges it presents every day.

What challenges have you faced over the years and how have you overcome them?

Just the day to day challenges of running your own business no matter what it is you are doing. Knowing all the regulations we have to follow from different agencies and knowing that one rule from one agency does not override the other. You always have to be thinking out of the box.

What's something about you that not many people know?

We have a BBQ team that has won a lot of awards at competition cook-offs. Our BBQ pit is very large and decked out: 3 offset smokers, surround sound stereo, (2) flat-screen TVs, flat top cooking area, gas burner, custom-built. If anybody wants a challenge, BRING IT ON!!!!

How do you think the industry is changing and what trends do you see coming up on the horizon?

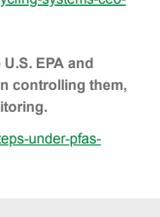
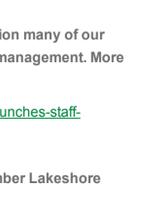
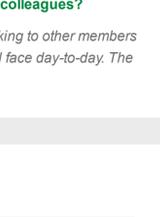
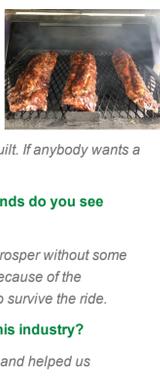
With labor challenges that we all face it will be harder to prosper without some automation. I feel we will have to downsize our workforce because of the unavailability of workers to do the job or put the brakes on to survive the ride.

What advice would you give to someone interested in this industry?

Do your homework and go for it. It has supported our family and helped us remember how fortunate we all are.

Is there anything else you would like to share with your colleagues?

I always look forward to the yearly convention. I enjoy speaking to other members and know we are not alone with the same challenges we all face day-to-day. The CDRA always keeps up my spirits!!



Industry News

AEM, organizers of ConExpo-Con/Agg and an association many of our vendor members also belong to, has reshuffled its top management. More complete description here:

www.aem.org/news/q4-2019/planning-for-the-future-aem-launches-staff-leadership-succession-plan/

Good article in Waste Today about CDRA sponsor member Lakeshore Recycling Systems:

<https://www.wastetodaymagazine.com/article/lakeshore-recycling-systems-ceo-ganda-top-hauler-list-chicago/>

PFAs are growing into a contaminant of concern for the U.S. EPA and others, and they are nasty stuff. EPA is going to move on controlling them, including in the waste stream. Something CDRA is monitoring.

<https://wasteadvantagemag.com/epa-takes-two-important-steps-under-pfas-action-plan/>

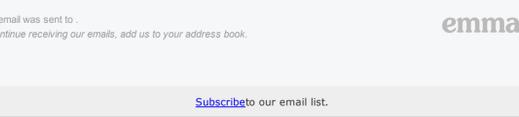
Submit Newsletter Content

Do you have industry content to be considered for CDRA's monthly e-Newsletter? We encourage you to submit ideas as often as you have them. Although not every news item is shared, we will review each submission based on our audience's interests and information needs.

Thank you!

Submit Your News Item

Special Thanks to Our CDRA 2019 Sponsor Members

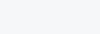


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