Temporary Climate Solutions Case Study: ATEX innovation helps safely deliver project on time

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When Bilfinger Salamis, a market leading service provider for the energy generation industry, was commissioned to blast and paint the Britannia platform in the North Sea, its project managers knew that one important condition of the contract would be the provision of ATEX certified dehumidification equipment. In December 2012 there was only one provider in the UK capable of delivering such equipment – Polygon.

Problem

ATEX is the name commonly given to the two European Directives for controlling explosive atmospheres in any type of industry and was originally taken from the French title of the 94/9/EC directive: Appareils destinés à être utilisés en **AT**mosphères **EX**plosives.

Directive 99/92/EC (also known as 'ATEX 137' or the 'ATEX Workplace Directive') provides minimum requirements for improving the protection of workers potentially at risk from explosive atmospheres. Directive 94/9/EC (also known as 'ATEX 95' or the 'ATEX Equipment Directive') concerns equipment and protective systems intended for use in potentially explosive atmospheres.

Bilfinger Salamis was commissioned to blast and paint the central column truss on the Britannia platform stationed 130 miles North-East of Aberdeen. Achieving effective, productive, longer life coatings in such a humid and corrosive environment is almost impossible without very careful control of humidity levels, arresting corrosion of the blasted metal surface and allowing the project teams to 'hold-the-blast' for days or weeks, rather than hours, before painting.

As an ATEX Zone 1, it was imperative that ATEX certified equipment was employed to not only ensure the safety of the operators and project teams; but also ensure the contract was delivered on time, on budget and to the stringent quality standards demanded by the owners.

Solution

Polygon, a global market leader in temporary climate solutions has been working with coatings contractors for over 40 years and uniquely recognised the need for ATEX approved units in this sector. Our engineers were commissioned to build desiccant dehumidifiers to become fully sealed, conforming to ATEX Zone 1 standards – a first in the UK.

In order to meet stringent off-shore safety standards, a specialist HOFR supply cable was fitted to ensure the unit was compatible with the rig's electric outputs. The unit was also fitted with a weather resistant anti-static cover. The special lifting frame was certified for off-shore use by Global Integrated Testing at its facility in Aberdeen.

Two units were installed on the platform in December 2012 and ran without interruption for the duration of the three month project. Airflows and other controls were pre-set to ensure conditions were met, removing the need for any technician intervention and negating any downtime.

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Results

Michael Taylor, Project Manager for Bilfinger Salamis commented, "When we kicked off the Britannia FM Project the need for ATEX approved dehumidification was identified as a value added ticket to ensure control of the environment and allow continuity of the works. We searched the UK market with a view to sourcing fit for purpose units only to find that there were none available which met with the specification. We needed to address the gap in the industry and so we sat down with Polygon who were identified as the best solution to deliver an ATEX approved unit.

Polygon has delivered a fully certified and approved unit to the industry which I am pleased to say was well received by all the interested parties. We have recently mobilised a couple of these units to support an extensive PFP project on the Britannia Platform where it was critical to control the local environment in order to successfully deliver the scope on time and within budget. The feedback from the project team was very positive and supported our initial decision to deliver ATEX approved units to the industry."

Andy Oakes, Director of Polygon's UK Temporary Climate Solutions business commented:
"It's great that these two ATEX Zone 1 units met BIS Salamis' needs. We've gathered data which helps us in the development of a second generation machine with a smaller footprint and higher output."

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