

Energy savings and efficiency using high speed doors

The best to ensure you lose heat from your warehouse and rack up fuel bills is to make sure your building has a nice big hole in the side, points out Nick Cox, one of the sales team at loading bay specialists sara LBS. But, if you are greener or trying to run a profitable business – or both – you might like to look at the latest in thermal management for roller shutter doors.

Most industrial and warehouse buildings have at least one level access door for moving goods in and out of the building. This door is usually quite large, often four metres wide and up to five metres high, thus facilitating free flow of people and materials. Such large doors easily allow the passage of a forklift truck, which is pretty much a standard requirement these days as the majority of goods are palletised for transport - but they also allow heat to pour out.

A generation ago, little consideration was given to matters such heat loss, energy efficiency or employees' comfort. Often loading bay doors were left open for long periods, possibly for entire shifts. Traditional external doors were heavy and manually operated, so options for opening and closing them quickly and frequently were limited, restricting their use for heat retention.

By the 1990s enlightened employers were starting to install automatic, high-speed roller-shutter or curtain doors to retain heat and improve the working environment of employees operating in the vicinity of the goods entry/exit doors. Roller shutter doors are normally fitted with a PVC curtain, which in itself offers little thermal insulation but serves to reduce the movement of air between the building and the outside environment.

Using a high-speed secondary door minimised the time the door opening is clear, thus preventing heat loss and protecting employees from freezing blasts of wind and rain. Unsurprisingly, the result of this normally increased productivity and reduced absenteeism due to coughs, colds and other winter ailments. It is also notable that over the last 20 years energy costs have rocketed, environmental concerns have come to the fore and many new health and safety laws have been introduced.

Employers have found that installing a secondary high-speed curtain-door does not disrupt loading operations. A typical sara LBS high speed curtain opens and closes at 2.5m/sec, so with doors that are 2.5m high the opening/closing time is one second, while a 5m tall door can go from fully open to fully closed in two seconds. This means the loading bay door can be closed the vast majority of the time and energy savings alone will give a payback time of under 18 months. Additional benefits include increased productivity and reduced wear and tear on the external primary door.

While reducing heat loss in winter is a major benefit of high-speed loading bay doors, there are also a number of secondary benefits that can also be very important. For instance in the cold weather wildlife and birds are just as keen on finding warmth as humans, so may be tempted to enter a loading bay in search of shelter. This would be a nuisance in most situations and could seriously compromise biosecurity in food and beverage, medical, pharmaceutical and other hygienic facilities. A high-speed door that only opens momentarily will reduce the likelihood of this. It will also block the view into the loading bay, which will help discourage potential intruders, as well as helping to keep out snow, rain and surface water that penetrates overhead canopies and porches.

Taking these advantages to the next level, sara LBS has recently introduced a new curtain-door, the Sprint Spiral, which combines automatic high-speed operation with an insulated aluminium curtain. This blocks air movements, insulates against heat transfer and reflects heat back into the loading bay. It is available in a range of colours and can be fitted with vision panels and other options.

It is also worth noting that the thermal performance of the main roller doors can be enhanced substantially by insulation of the main panels and adding weather seals and draught excluders between the door and the frame. This will be very effective when the main door is shut, which is typically overnight for up to 16 hours at a time.

sara LBS offers decades of experience in design, specification, installation and aftersales support for industrial door and loading bay solutions. Working with an expert sales engineer such as Nick Cox allows warehouse managers to calculate potential energy savings prior to installation and will ensure that the door continues to operate effectively for years to come.

Photo Captions:

Pic 1:- Reducing heat loss in winter is a major benefit of sara LBS high-speed loading bay doors.

Pic 2:- Using a high-speed secondary door minimised the time the door opening is clear, thus preventing heat loss and protecting employees from freezing blasts of wind and rain.

Pic 3:- sara LBS offers decades of experience in design, specification, installation and aftersales support for industrial door and loading bay solutions.

About sara LBS

sara Loading Bay Specialists supplies, installs and maintains loading bay systems, high speed doors and industrial doors. It has provided high quality product solutions and outstanding customer service since it was founded 30 years ago and this remains its sole focus.



Product Solutions

sara LBS's range of high quality products includes its complete loading bay packages (including scissor lifts, ramps and dock levellers), 'Sprint' range of rapid roll, high speed doors for internal and external use, insulated sectional overhead doors and roller shutter doors. It has extensive sector expertise and provides total packages that are tailored to meet all its customer's needs. Specialist sectors include food and beverage, pharmaceutical, automotive, manufacturing, logistics and distribution.

Maintenance & Repair

Sara LBS provides nationwide 24/7 service cover and rapid response times for all loading bay systems, dock shelters, high speed doors and industrial doors using its specialist engineers based across the country. It works with end users to extend the safe working lifetime of their doors and equipment by providing both preventative maintenance packages and standard and emergency repairs.

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