

NEWSPAPERS & TECHNOLOGY

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FACILITY PLANNING BY DARIO DIMARE



Hey, what's up? Docks!

Docks for shipping, docks for receiving, docks for waste, and docks for equipment installation are often treated too lightly or simply passed up when designing a newspaper facility. Keep in mind, other than people, almost everything that comes and goes in a newspaper facility passes through a dock.

We have come up with four basic types of docks for a newspaper. There are many variations, configurations, amenities, types of support equipment and safety issues associated with each of these dock types. The four basic types are 1) Receiving Docks, 2) Shipping Docks, 3) Waste Docks and 4) Equipment and Service Docks.

Receiving Docks are used for things such as newsprint, ink, inserts, plates, strapping material, bottom wrap, returns and building supplies. There are too many issues to consider for each type of product mentioned in this article, so we will simply touch on a few of the major issues.

With newsprint and inserts, the truck height and length are very important. An example is the dock apron. An apron is the area in front of the docks that is usually constructed of concrete in lieu of asphalt, due to the heavy loads of the vehicles. In warm weather, asphalt gets soft and can be damaged by sharp turns or prolonged loading, as is the case with a parked truck.

In one instance, when we were designing the insert receiving dock apron for the Lincoln (Neb.) Journal-Star, we actually measured all of the trucks delivering inserts for one month.

The average length we came up with was 71 feet. The longest length was 75 feet. A properly designed apron for a 75-foot truck should be two times the length of the truck, plus 10 feet, or 160 feet! That's a lot of concrete.

Receiving ink is another issue. Handling totes, kits or even the hose of a tanker all require special consideration with regard to spill containment. Oil based inks, especially petroleum, should not be allowed to run off into a storm sewer.

There was a newspaper on the East

Coast that had a container of red ink dropped off at a dock after hours. Unfortunately, it was left at a distribution dock.

When the fleet arrived to deliver the newspapers, one of the vehicles backed into the container and cracked it. It was dark, and the shipping docks were not well lit. By morning, the trucks had backed up into the pool of red ink so many times they literally "painted the town red." There was no "backing out" of this one due to the fact that the ink got darker and darker as it got closer to the newspaper.

Shipping Docks can come in many sizes and configurations, depending on the fleet served. Bulk delivery can occur in tractor-trailers or box trucks. Some fleets consist of step vans, box trucks and passenger vans. Others are simply carrier-owned pick-up trucks, vans or cars.

Even if all of the delivery vehicles are the same size, there are still several viable options as to how to load them and which type of dock opening makes the most sense. A box truck being loaded with carts needs to have the truck bed and dock height at the same level. The same vehicle can receive bundles on a boom loader or on a gravity fed, roller top conveyor.

If the gravity conveyor is used, then the dock should be higher than the truck bed. The point is this area needs to be properly planned because the dock type will vary depending on the individual needs of each newspaper, as well as building and site constraints.

Waste Docks tend to be the runt of the litter. "It's just garbage." "Who cares where the trash goes?" "Put it in a Dumpster."

Well it's not that easy.

There are so many types of trash and waste that need to be properly dealt with that it boggles the mind.

In a joint effort with the Graphic Arts Technical Foundation, Dario Designs came up with more than 70 different possible waste streams in a newspaper.

Some were just trash, some were hazardous and required special handling, while

others were recyclable and produced revenue, and still others were actually used to heat the facility.

Some local codes have special waste requirements, such as providing a protective cover over the garbage, marking hazardous waste and providing ventilation in the waste dock area. Many planning ordinances require decorative buffers or screening. This dock area needs to be well thought-out to ensure a safe, efficient and clean operation.

Equipment and Service Docks are usually non-existent, often improperly designed, yet cherished when needed. These are the bragging rights docks, especially when the new press unit is purchased, it needs to be received and the properly designed dock is waiting for it. Somebody is a hero then.

The opposite scenario is all too common to newspapers. We often hear "We'll knock out this wall", "bring it in through the roof", "rig a special gantry" and then they pay dearly.

It is not impossible or very costly to modify one of the normal building docks to serve this purpose. A large, on-grade dock for receiving everything from a tying machine to a press unit is money well spent. If a tractor-trailer can back into a facility to drop off units, this in itself may pay for several docks by reducing the installation cost of a press. The on-grade dock will also allow a fork truck or clamp truck access to your dock apron for receiving anything from a pallet of inserts to a roll of newsprint to a large piece of equipment.

This type of dock is the key to flexibility in a newspaper. Do not underestimate its importance.

Finally, we have come up with many types of accessories and issues common to all the docks listed above. Some of these are listed below.

- Weather protection and overhangs
- Dock seals
- Dock bumpers
- Building protection

Continued on back

From front

- Overhead lighting
- Inside truck lighting
- Audio communication
- Visual communication
- Security
- Truckers' waiting room
- Clearance between docks
- Staging area
- Number of docks
- Spill containment
- Truck restraints

- Apron size and material
- Management
- Orientation
- Frequency of use

In summing up, there are many ways to improve an operation and increase safety, if you properly design your building docks. It's up to you to make sure that the often-overlooked subject of docks is not passed up.▲

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