

Yards cannot afford to overlook pre-shredding, says Zato

Downtime: the silent **profit killer**

In the scrap metal processing industry, every minute of downtime is lost revenue. As yards work to boost efficiency and profits, it is easy to focus on the latest technologies that promise faster processing, higher yields or better margins. But the one critical factor that often gets overlooked in the race for higher returns is the crippling impact of downtime.

For scrap yard owners, especially those running medium-to-small operations, the stakes are incredibly high. Unplanned downtime can bring your entire operation to a standstill with ripple effects that go far beyond the immediate cost of repairs. If your yard relies heavily on equipment such as hammer mills, consider this a wake-up call.

HIDDEN COSTS

Downtime is more than just a minor inconvenience; it's a silent killer of profits. When a hammer mill grinds to a halt, whether due to routine maintenance or an unexpected breakdown, it's not just production hours that are lost. Your business haemorrhages money. Every hour that your machinery sits idle, you are not only losing potential revenue but also racking up extra costs in labour, energy and missed deliveries. In some cases, downtime can swallow up to 20% of your operational time. That might be acceptable in some industries but, in the scrap processing business where margins are razor-thin, it's a figure you simply can't afford.

'UNSHREDDABLES' CHALLENGE

A major culprit behind unexpected downtime is 'unshreddables', those tough, oversized materials that hammer mills just aren't built to handle. When certain large metal objects or

reinforced composites make their way into the shredder, the results can often be catastrophic. These materials don't just damage your equipment, causing immediate shutdowns and costly repairs. They also contribute to long-term wear and tear, leading to more frequent breakdowns and ever-increasing maintenance bills.

But the impact doesn't stop there. When your machinery fails, your workers are left idle, production schedules fall behind and customer deadlines are missed. All of this erodes trust, potentially driving away business. For small to medium-sized yards, where every job counts, these are risks you simply cannot afford to take.

ESSENTIAL: PRE-SHREDDERS

Enter the pre-shredder, a piece of equipment that's quickly become a game-changer for yards dealing with mixed or unpredictable materials. The main job of a pre-shredder is to tackle the tough stuff before it reaches your hammer mill, sorting and separating materials so that only processable feedstock gets through.

There are three main types of pre-shredders: rippers, rotating shears and spyke type. If your yard frequently encounters unshreddables, a rotating shear is particularly effective. It's designed to break down the most challenging materials, protecting your downstream machinery from damage and dramatically reducing the risk of unplanned downtime.

NO EXPLOSIONS

Beyond improving operational efficiency, there's another crucial reason to invest in a pre-shredder: safety. Explosions caused by unshreddables are a real and present danger in scrap yards. Not only do they pose a significant threat to your workers, they can also trigger neighbourhood complaints. A pre-shredder like the Zato Blue Devil can help mitigate these risks by dealing with hazardous materials before they cause problems. It's an invaluable tool for maintaining a safe working environment and protecting both your team and your bottom line. [🔗](#)



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