



# UHMW-PE-lined trucks help clean-up Katrina's destruction

PLASTICS  
IN NATURAL  
DISASTERS

by Quadrant Engineering Plastic Products

**T**he Gulf Coast is no stranger to natural disasters and the clean-up that follows. Every hurricane that comes ashore leaves a path of destruction that must be cleaned up and hauled away before rebuilding can begin. Katrina, a category three storm, left much destruction, but the devastating blow was a breach in levees. This breach allowed Lake Pontchartrain to flood much of the city of New Orleans, sweeping most of the mud and rock used to build the levee system into the city. The U.S. Army Corp of Engineers was faced with the challenge of removing an enormous amount of flood water debris before they could even attempt to rebuild the broken levees. Only then could they concentrate on hauling in millions of tons of gravel, dirt and concrete to redesign a levee system that would withstand future and possibly larger hurricanes. This was a daunting, but important and timely mission.

## *Special formulation of UHMW-PE liners to the rescue*

Expert help was needed to expedite the clean-up. The U.S. Army Corp of Engineers called upon the truck specialty distributor who helped orchestrate the clean-up

following the Florida hurricanes, which in turn sub-contracted with trucking companies throughout the United States. Many of the truck companies contracted relied on a special formulation of half-inch thick brand of UHMW-PE liners in their over-the-road trailers, ensuring that even the stickiest mud and silt would empty out fast and clean. This premium product also protected their truck beds from damage by over-sized rocks, concrete and other debris. For this very reason, many of the leading OEMs install these liners in their new trailers to increase performance and longevity. UHMW-PE-lined trucks proved more efficient as they dumped cleaner and quicker with every single load. Less time spent cleaning out carry-back from truck beds meant more loads per day, translating to faster clean-up from the devastation.

When the rebuilding of the levees finally began, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers faced a new challenge. The instability of the soil in the construction area made it difficult to utilize long bed trailers full of the dirt and soil needed to rebuild the levee. Because of the severe weight of the load, the trailers quickly sank into the new soil already placed in the area. Large truck and trailers were repeatedly

causing delays by getting stuck or tipping over. This created a potential danger to the drivers and work crews. Trucks needed to get in and out, quickly, efficiently and safely. It became clear that smaller trucks would have to be used to reduce the weight concern and that a faster, clean dump was mandatory.

Since the volume of each load of fill was greatly reduced by using smaller trucks and pups, it was imperative that they were able to increase the number of runs per truck per day. Any carry-back left in the bed from the previous load reduced the volume of the next, slowing down the entire effort while driving up fuel consumption. The U.S. Army Corp of Engineers mandated that all trucks working on the project be lined with plastic bed liners. The special formulation of UHMW-PE liners were a big part of the answer and did the job efficiently, dumping hundreds of cubic yards of fill dirt to aid in the levee's completion. Once again, "polymers" are called upon to provide the solution to a difficult problem in a tough environment.

## *Advantages and benefits*

Polymer truck bed liners are not new to the trucking scene or strangers to difficult tasks. A properly engineered, properly installed truck bed liner will make short, easy work of hauling anything from hot asphalt to below freezing contents and everything sticky or abrasive in between. The liners provide a low maintenance solution to releasing each and every load smoothly and quickly with as little wear and tear on the vehicle as possible. Time equals money in any business. Less time spent dumping and cleaning out the truck bed between loads equates to more loads per day per truck, maximizing both productivity and profits. ■



*Quadrant's Quicksilver® high performance truck liners are designed to clean-out and clean-up some of the toughest materials in the very worst conditions. Its range of materials and expertise in installation allow liners that will fit most style trucks, trailers or pup beds. Quadrant's Quicksilver® UHMW-PE installation network can quickly turn around trucks or trailers — keeping them on the road and making their owners money.*

Quicksilver® is a registered trademark of the Quadrant group of companies.

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