

WHAT CAN DISAB VACLOADER DO?



DISAB case study: United Utilities cleaning

United Utilities is the largest water company in the UK, and Ian Smith, the Vactor Services Manager looks after the cleaning requirements of its 650 waste water treatment plants, 220 portable water treatment plants and 2,500 pumping stations in the sewer network in the North of England. This huge asset portfolio is why Ian has a full time service staff of 22 and three DISAB truck mounted vacuum systems in his fleet of specialist maintenance vehicles, so we asked Ian for a brief overview of the DISAB trucks and the sort of work they undertake.

“We have DISAB trucks because there’s nothing else that does what they can do. They’ve got a blowing as well as sucking capability, airflow of 8,500 cubic feet at 80% vacuum, and with its Boom, frankly you’d have to see it shift wet as well as dry material and the speed at which it can do it, to believe what these trucks are capable of. There’s nothing that matches their longevity and reliability either.”

As Gotland is part of the DISAB Group, world leaders in low- noise mobile and stationary vacuum systems, we thought we’d take a closer look at these extraordinary machines. The DISAB Group is best known for its unique, high powered truck mounted vacuum systems that are used for sucking, blowing and tipping all kinds of dry and wet material. They represent the ultimate in usable vacuum power for industrial applications.

What are DISAB trucks used for?

Ian continues: “We bought our first DISAB truck back in 2006 and it became obvious that we needed another two on the fleet, because with such a large number of assets to look after, there’s a constant demand for both the DISAB trucks we have and for those we can hire from our approved contractors. The most recent DISAB truck was purchased in March 2009.”



“What people don’t see of water treatment plants is what we’re dealing with and maintaining all the time; the deep lifting of sludge and grit from detention tanks, storm overflows and so on. One of the deepest we have on our books is 40 metres down, underneath of all places the car park at Blackpool FC!”

I CAN HONESTLY SAY THERE’S NOTHING LIKE THESE SPECIALIST VEHICLES FOR THEIR RELIABILITY AND LONGEVITY, LET ALONE THEIR VERSATILITY.

“Maintaining these facilities means they work efficiently. If we didn’t do this the sewer and water systems would soon become unserviceable and our industrial and residential customers would soon notice the difference. A 30 metre lift of several tonnes of heavy wet material is very typical of a day’s work for the DISAB trucks, but one of the most unusual tasks was when we used their power to blow pea gravel UP 30 metres into a biological filter plant at Birkenhead.”

“We had to shift 1,200 tonnes of this gravel and it took two DISAB trucks two weeks. There was a compliance issue with this particular plant, so we threw everything we had at it. Because we had the DISAB trucks, we reckon it took us half the time it would have done by standard lifting techniques and several operatives on site.”

DISAB’s uniqueness and reliability

A DISAB truck’s power can work both ways, as Ian explains: “It’s the DISAB truck’s blowing as well as its sucking capabilities that make it so incredibly versatile. Our units were specially made for us by DISAB using stainless steel so that we can handle all sorts of toxic sludge and hazardous liquids, another unique ability for United Utilities.”

“I used to be a contractor, so I know what’s what in terms of plant, and I can honestly say there’s nothing like these specialist vehicles for their reliability and longevity, let alone their versatility. Besides being very well built and engineered, they’ve given 100% every day, and there are not many bits of plant you can say that about.”

Keeping the DISAB trucks on the road

Ian’s fleet of specialist vehicles and plant has to be ready whenever they’re needed, which means maintenance and servicing is critical: “Of course, we keep our DISAB trucks in tip top shape all the time, because we need them on call 24/7. That’s why for us the opening of the service and parts centre at Irlam in nearby Manchester has been very good news. Irlam’s vital to our operation as we can now get almost any part we want within an hour’s drive of our location in Blackburn.”

“Compared to waiting for parts to come over from Sweden, this is an ideal solution for us, and since opening three years ago the stock of parts held and the service delivery gets better and better. The net result is that it cuts down the time that would have been lost waiting for parts to come from Sweden, or for that matter the alternative cost of hiring in a contractor.”

“All this means we can genuinely be ready for action whenever any part of the United Utilities asset portfolio needs a DISAB truck’s capabilities, and keep one of the UK’s largest water asset portfolios working efficiently to deliver clean water and waste water removal 24 hours a day, to its millions of customers.”

