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Plant Efficiency At Risk Without Careful Chute Design

The efficiency of crushers, screens, mills and other large equipment in a minerals processing plant can be severely undermined if the chutes at transfer points are not doing a proper job.

Mark Baller, managing director of Weba Chute Systems, highlights that chutes play a vital role in plant reliability and performance. “A well-designed chute ensures that a crusher receives the right material at the correct angle, for example,” says Baller. “By the same token, it will load a screen optimally, and will facilitate the correct feed rates into a mill, for best performance and economical power consumption.”

He argues that most plant operations are today recognising that chutes are not just basic plate-work. Rather, they need to embody a high level of technical design that creates a fit-for-purpose solution for the particular commodity and application.

“After 30 years of continuous improvement in our chute designs, we have worked hard to change the traditional mindset, which assigned chutes a sort of ‘step-child’ status in the process circuit,” he says. “More and more plant managers recognise that no two chute applications are the same, and that careful design must go into developing a solution to their specific operating conditions.”

Weba Chute Systems combines a scientific approach – including finite element analysis and the latest design technology – with its extensive experience in the field. The result is a customised solution that controls the flow of material, taking into account its physical properties and the surrounding conditions.

“We have seen many plant shutdowns caused by incorrect chute design,” Baller says. “Damage can include holes in screen decks or damaged conveyor belts. In addition to the repair costs, plants must pay even more dearly for plant downtime.”

On the other side of the coin, the savings achieved through good chute design – leading to more efficient plant operation and fewer stoppages – means that most of Weba Chute Systems’ installations can pay for themselves in less than 12 months.

The company has supplied over 4,300 chutes into the global market over the decades, of which about 3,500 are still operational.

CAREFUL PIC 01 : A typical transfer point discharging onto a conveyor.

CAREFUL PIC 02 : A typical transfer point discharging into a crusher.

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FROM : CORALYNNE & ASSOCIATES
TEL : +79 523 7422
EMAIL : communicate@coralynne.co.za
WEBSITE: www.coralynne.co.za

FOR : MARK BALLER
Weba Chute Systems
TEL :+27 011 827 9372
WEBSITE: www.webachutes.com