

TKO Dock Doors Help Associated Grocers Knockout Door Damage

Company:

Associated Grocers, Inc.
Baton Rouge, LA

Challenge:

Preventing door damage from forklift impacts to maintaining a cool temperature on the loading dock

Solution:

TKO ThermalWeight® and TKO CruiserWeight®

Industry:

Food & Beverage

Geography:

Baton Rouge, LA

“The doors have more than paid for themselves in reduced maintenance, downtime and parts.”

- Matt Fuqua, Director of Facilities for Associated Grocers

Maintaining a consistent temperature range of -25 degrees to 72 degrees Fahrenheit is challenging for any facility, but none more so than those with hundreds of loading dock doors exposing a warehouse or distribution center to the elements. The mixture of hot and cold temperatures and a fleet of fork lifts and pallet jacks are rough on equipment, especially overhead doors. Fortunately, TKO Dock Doors has developed an all-in-one solution to combat door damage and energy loss on the loading dock.

This solution was certainly something that interested management at Associated Grocers, Inc., located in Baton Rouge, LA. This massive facility is housed on a 70 acre campus with near 700 employees that manage the cold and dry storage warehouse space. The facility incorporates over 100 dock positions and has space in excess of 820,000 square feet to support their network of more than 210 independent retail outlets across Louisiana and the southeastern U.S.

Associated Grocers was founded in May, 1950 with the goal of providing a full shopping list of products and services that allowed independent supermarkets and minimarkets to compete with the large national chains, all while providing unique hometown flavors with fast, friendly service. And today, more than 62 years later,



that mission and commitment to the customer remain intact.

Matt Fuqua, Director of Facilities, has been with Associated for over 16 years. He points out that while they are working in a facility that is just shy of one million square feet, there is still not a great deal of room in the actual dock area to maneuver fork lifts, pallet jacks and product loads. “Bottom line, our new employees were training in our refrigerated dairy storage area and were damaging the doors.” says Fuqua. “We needed doors that could withstand the constant impacts, maintain their shape and operate the way they were supposed to facility wide,” he added.

Even the best run facilities frequently experience door damage from fork lifts running into the panels and tracks with their forks or loads. As a result of these impacts, panel and track damage are common and can lead to expensive repairs, replacements and energy loss. Fuqua, after experiencing this damage first hand worked with Scott Callihan,

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a TKO product specialist, to develop the perfect mixture of TKO solutions to best suit the facility's individual needs. Based on Associated Grocers' application, Callihan recommended TKO CruiserWeight impactable dock doors for the regular cold storage areas. With its full-height 12 gauge galvanized steel track, 6' Impact-A-Track and 1 ¾" thick insulated foam core panels with damage resistant polymer interior facing, the CruiserWeight was the perfect addition to guard against fork lift impacts and help maintain facility temperatures in the hot Louisiana summers.

In the dairy cooler area, Fuqua opted to replace the existing non-impactable freezer doors with the rugged TKO ThermalWeight door. The ThermalWeight is designed to prevent damage to door panels and tracks when impacted as well as provide superior thermal protection. The ThermalWeight utilizes 4' thick, moisture-resistant, R-23 insulated panels to offer this highly regulated temperature controlled environment the perfect mix of thermal and damage protection.

In addition to the insulated panels, the ThermalWeight's tight perimeter weather seal incorporates a double loop seal to prevent energy loss. The seal is attached to the door versus mounted to the door jamb, keeping it out of the way of fork lifts and trailers to avoid damage and provide a more consistent seal. Moreover, the door employs a flexible bottom double loop seal for an airtight fit to the floor.

While a large portion of the facility is refrigerated, one area houses only dry goods that are shipped to a variety of store locations. In this section, insulation was not a priority for Fugua who chose to install non-insulated CruiserWeight doors with additional brush side seals. These doors provide superior impactability against even the most severe hits with their ¾" thick, 7-ply wood panels, while still keeping out dirt, debris and insects. Non-insulated CruiserWeight doors are a cost-effective option to heavily insulated doors where energy loss is not an issue.

The ThermalWeight and CruiserWeight doors have a unique impactable design that allows them to stand up to the abuse they experience on the dock. They use heavy duty, retractable plungers vs. rollers and ride in a v-grooved track. When a fork lift collides with the doors, the impact causes the plungers to retract, allowing the door to release from the opening and prevent panel damage.

After the door is knocked out from the track, a light pull on the door handles resets the door, putting it back in operation and cutting down on repairs and downtime. The ability to simply reset the doors allows maintenance crews to stay busy working in other areas of the facility.

“Our main concern from a maintenance perspective,” says Fugua “was the damage that we were experiencing from the impacts on our standard metal overhead doors.” “Once we installed the TKO doors, our maintenance

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issues were virtually eliminated.” he added.

Since door damage and high maintenance costs were Fugua’s main concerns, he also elected to install TKO’s patented Impact-A-Track. A first line of defense against impacts on the door tracks is the rugged Impact-A-Track that runs 6’ up the door opening on the CruiserWeight and the entire length of the door on the ThermalWeight. Made of solid, heavy-duty columns of UHMW plastic, the tracks effortlessly deflect forklift impacts without sustaining any damage or exposing the facility to hot, outside air unlike standard metal roller doors.

When a traditional standard sectional door track is hit it bends out of shape. The roller guides that carry the door panels become harder to operate, which entices dock workers to leave the doors open between loads leaving the facility vulnerable to the hot, humid southern summer air.

This is no longer the case since the TKO

ThermalWeight and CruiserWeight doors have been installed. Their tough tracks enable the doors to glide easily up and down even after severe impacts and cause no strain on the dock employees. As a result they provided maintenance savings, temperature control and increased employee productivity.

“The doors have more than paid for themselves in reduced maintenance, downtime and parts.” Fugua mentions. “The success we’ve seen with TKO doors has been so impactful that we have signed on to replace ten doors each year until all the dock doors at Associated Grocers are TKO.” This reduction in maintenance costs has allowed Associated to take the savings they realized on the loading dock and incorporate it into other areas of the facility.

Associated Grocers prides itself on delivering the freshest products on time to its massive distribution network. Thanks to innovative products such as TKO Dock Doors, maintenance and downtime have been reduced so drastically, they are able to pass the savings along to their customers.

