

Customer Profile

Fenner Drives O-Rings are a Lifesaver at French Postal Facility

EAGLE®

Electric guitars. Shrink-wrapped mufflers. Scooters. Medicine.

Some really strange boxes and parcels roll down the line at the La Poste Colissimo postal sorting facility, located close to the city of Grenoble, France. A few packages, especially auto parts, have pointed surfaces that cut, scratch or damage the O-Rings on the Actemium roller conveyor.

In addition to the abuse from the sharp edges, the conveyor features a 180-degree power curve requiring a transition from line-shaft driven rollers on the straightaway to motor-driven ones on the curved portion. That causes additional stress on the conveyor's 60 O-Rings.

As a result, the facility's maintenance department had to replace the unit's standard O-Rings every day or two. Since the 81-yard (74-meter) conveyor operates 15 hours a day, six days a week, it was taking the team about six hours a month to replace the belts, delaying processing at the facility.

That time loss is critical. Currently facing intense competition in the package shipment space, La Poste aspires to be the leader in overnight delivery, which is growing much faster than the rest of the otherwise-declining postal industry. Most of the growth is fueled by e-commerce.

La Poste's plan envisions not just 24-hour service, but soon, delivery within hours. As a result, the Grenoble facility, opened with great fanfare in October 2019, was built for speed, equipped with the latest material handling and information technology. Packages virtually hurtle through the plant traveling at three yards (2.7 meters) per second on the fastest conveyor. The plant processes between 7,000 to 12,000 packages an hour, relying on several conveyors.

During a routine contact with the facility's maintenance director, Fenner Drives proposed a solution. After trying twisted O-Rings, which delivered a slight improvement, they worked with La Poste to come up with the ultimate solution: black High Elastic, High Tension (HEHT) O-Rings known for their longevity and rugged durability. For more information visit <https://www.fennerdrives.com/eagle-o-ring/>

The black HEHT O-Rings have a special urethane formulation that delivers a Shore A durometer (hardness) rating of 85 (the O-Rings that came standard on the conveyor were 83-85). They are designed to handle the level of elasticity and tension required.

With only one replacement during the first several months of operation, the black HEHT O-Rings have been a resounding success. In fact, La Poste is conducting testing to quantify the exact savings achieved with the project and evaluate use of the black HEHT O-Rings in two other conveyors. Plus, the postal service continues to work with Fenner Drives to find other opportunities for improvements that reduce downtime and improving processing performance.

"You saved my life"

— Jean-Philippe Fayet, FIVES Maintenance Manager in logistics

To learn more about O-Rings and our full distribution center portfolio visit <https://www.fennerdrives.com/distribution-centers/>.

