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From **Metalworking Production**, 31 May 2005

Robotic surface cleaning

A new robotic system for 3D waterjet cleaning and surface treatment is designed for efficient, accurate removal of coatings, grease and other substances from metal surfaces.

The new robotic system for three-dimensional waterjet cleaning and surface treatment is available from KMT Cutting Systems (formerly ABB I-R Waterjet Systems).

Based on the company's Cutting Box systems for waterjet cutting and routing, the new Cutting Box Blaster is designed to offer efficient, fast and accurate removal of coatings, grease and other substances from metal surfaces.

Applications include removing paint on fixtures used in curing ovens for automotive bodies, removing excess polyurethane and other plastics from injection mouldings, and cleaning blades in refurbishment work on diesel turbines and aircraft jet engines.

The system also offers the option of abrasive blasting using a mixture of water and sand within the same cell.

The Cutting Box Blaster can be equipped with one or two inverted robots, mounted in fixed positions or able to move on tracks attached to the ceiling of the cell.

The cleaning jet in the system is produced by forcing a fine jet of water at very high pressure through a multiple set of nozzles in a unit called a rotojet. This is mounted on the robot arm in the same way as a waterjet cutting head or routing head in other Cutting Box systems.

Developed by KMT Waterjet Systems, the rotojet nozzles are mounted within a body that is rotated independently by a pneumatically driven motor.

This produces a 'cone'-shaped cleaning jet that, combined with the movement of the robot or the worktable, provides optimum coverage for cleaning a surface that is productive and flexible. Both rotating and fixed worktables are available for use in the Cutting Box Blaster.

Instead of high-pressure steel tubing, the high pressure water entering the rotojet unit is passed through high-pressure flexible hosing to ensure the movement of the robot offers maximum flexibility for the cleaning process.

The Cutting Box Blaster is a safe, ergonomic and clean system, easily accessed through clear sliding doors, which also give a view of the cleaning operation. Whilst providing a spacious interior, the sound-proof enclosure still offers a compact footprint for installation in the cleaning shop or on the production floor.

The system can be installed and fully operational within five days and only requires a single operator.

The Cutting Box Blaster can be supplied as a turnkey system with special options for easy customisation, including training, installation and start-up assistance.



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