

Case Study: Air Power for the Rail Industry

The rail industry has a problem of trying to ensure that track is both safe and well maintained whilst maximising the time the track is available on which to run trains. In the past trackside maintenance work such as track levelling, tightening fishbolts and rail baseplate coach screws would have been completed manually.

Factair has now introduced the custom designed RailAir compressor which provides a source of compressed air that can be placed on the trackside close to the point of work. The RailAir compressor has been so popular in the UK that it can be considered the industry standard mobile rail compressor.

As a result it is used for a wide variety of applications, some of the more unusual include powering air operated moles for running cables under track, air lights and driving air operated power packs at up to 700 bar.

The RailAir compressor uses a petrol engine driven CompAir rotary vane compressor to provide an output of 10.4 l/s (22.0 cfm) at 7 bar. One of the main advantages of using the CompAir compressor is that it does not require an air receiver allowing Factair to design a compact unit that is highly mobile.

One of the most popular applications for the RailAir compressor is in track levelling work, particularly around switch toes and crossing areas. The original compacting technique known as tamping has been replaced by a 'stoneblowing' process, which generally lasts twice as long as tamping. To enable the compressor to be used in red zone working an automatic warning device is available.



RailAir Compressor



Railair unit being used for Stoneblowing