

Green Dividends: Recycle Your Grinding Sludge and Wheel Bodies

By Mark Robinson

Straw into gold? Not exactly, but far too many of us are throwing money right into the trash when it comes to grinding sludge that accumulates in our coolant tanks. We often think of it as an unavoidable, undesirable by-product that we all have to "live with." It contributes to the destruction of our coolant pumps, and it is just one more waste material we have to find a way to dispose of.

In today's politically and socially correct world of disposal, we often equate "being green" to "this is really going to cost me!" The reality, however, is grinding sludge "waste" is actually money waiting to be counted by you.

Around the country, companies specialize in collecting and reprocessing carbide grinding sludge, and they pay you for the material instead of you paying to get rid of it! For example, the following is a brief list of prices I was recently quoted for recycled materials:

- Solid carbide inserts, end mills, dies, drills, wear parts etc., \$10.50 per pound.
- Saw tips and carbide with silver brazing attached, \$10.00 per pound.
- Carbide grinding sludge (minimum 50%

CFS replaceable filter cartridges from Colonial Saw collect grinding carbide sludge (shown below) and turns your waste into profit.



(Tungsten contained), \$7.25 per dry pound.

Filter Systems

We are all trying to cut and control costs. Turning trash into cash is probably one of the least likely things we are looking at, but as an industry we can all, large or small, be socially responsible and have something to put in the bank for the effort! Cashing in our grinding sludge will also motivate us to empty our tanks more regularly, which in turn increases the life span of our pumps and our equipment. An added benefit to changing out our tanks regularly is it greatly improves the surface finish on the tools we process with our grinding equipment. Your customers will appreciate this fact greatly. It may also lead us to "harvest" the carbide fines through one of the many filtering options currently available.



Regular filtering simply means using something as easy to use as Colonial Saw's portable CFS system. Its hoses can be dropped into each coolant tank and the unit draws from the tank and returns the coolant to the tank after it passes through the filter. The system is totally self contained, runs on 110 volt power and has two easily replaceable filter cartridges. (To learn more about the CFS system see MADE IN AMERICA article in this newsletter issue.)

Some recycling companies will accept the complete cartridges after they have dried out. If your vendor does not accept the entire cartridge, it is a simple matter to cut the cartridge apart and shake or scrape the carbide into a container. A single cartridge filled with

grinding sludge may weigh 20 pounds, which would equate to approximately \$145 to you for the effort to collect its contents. Colonial Saw sells the 5 micron filter for \$24. Your net profit would be approximately \$121 for one cartridge, and since there are two cartridges in the filter system, that's \$242 in income each time you replace your filters! I don't have many machines that simply sit there pulling in money, but that one is a money maker for sure.

If nothing else, it may be just a little harder to drop this "junk" into the dumpster. Who knew being "Green" could pay princely dividends!

Aluminum and steel wheel cores are another source of money you may be throwing away!



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