The Problem:
We're getting a lot of calls lately from people who've just been visited by a state environmental official or received complaints from neighboring businesses about the dust generated by outdoor abrasive blast operations.

Outdoor blasting is still a major market within our industry, and will be for the foreseeable future. But the writing is on the wall. Federal and state regulations will continue the pressure to reduce or eliminate dust emissions. For manufacturers, the back lot is no longer a safe place to blast large weldments. Uncle Sam is watching and he's not real happy with what he sees. Containment is a fact of life for most major blasting and painting contractors, whether it's wrapping bridge spans or hanging skirting from a water tower.

The Solution:
Blast rooms were once used only by large manufacturers. They're big and relatively expensive. But, just one EPA fine (and the subsequent close monitoring) can make a $60,000 pre-assembled blast room look pretty reasonable. Essentially, a blast room is a very large blast cabinet. It includes the same components - blast machine, recovery system, media cleaning system, and dust collector. To help justify the cost, consider a blast room's three main advantages over outdoor blasting. First and foremost - you can blast day and night, the year round, regardless of the weather. Like cabinets, most blast rooms are placed inside an existing facility, but Clemco can build a weather-tight freestanding room on your back lot if needed.

Second - you can use recyclable media. Steel grit can be reused 200 to 250 times. Sand turns to dust after just one use. Some companies reuse garnet or mineral slag a few times, but they wind up blasting with dust and broken grit. Third - the blast room automatically recycles the media, eliminating 90 percent or more of the labor required to load the machine, shovel or vacuum the spent media, and dispose of the mess. Given a steady workload, many companies see a payback from a blast room in as little 12 to 18 months.

There are a lot of decisions that go into planning a blast room. Clemco offers a 16-page booklet to get you started. Send me an e-mail at info@clemcoindustries for your free copy. Include your mailing address, and please put “Herb” in the subject line.

Got a question about shot peening, abrasive blasting, or sample processing? Clemco can help. Call 636 239-8135 or submit your request online at www.clemcoindustries.com.