



# IMPACT Another PSC Success Story

**Oil Refinery — Automated Hydroblasting**



## High Tech Speeds Oil Refinery Maintenance

Advanced robotic technology is changing the face of American industry. From automobile manufacturing to hospital operating rooms, sophisticated machines perform tasks with greater precision, consistency, economy and safety than is possible using manual means. Now add industrial cleaning to the list of jobs advanced technology can accomplish.

One recent use of remote controlled maintenance units recently occurred at a large petroleum refinery in California, near Long Beach. The refinery processes over 150,000 barrels of crude oil per day.

Like all modern refineries, the plant has numerous horizontal heat exchangers that are critical to the distillation of raw petroleum into its component products. Some of these exchangers routinely clog with sulfur, which becomes rock hard and difficult to remove. Periodic cleaning using hydroblasting – water under intense pressure – is required to remove this sulfur and keep a refinery running at peak efficiency.

In early 2014, the turnaround manager at the refinery asked PSC if they could provide such hydroblasting services. The refinery had used another company for exchanger cleaning in the past, but found them to be slow and expensive.

*“I appreciate how well PSC’s equipment was able to remove the hardened sulfur from our facility’s condensers, and how quickly the job was completed. PSC gets the job done.”*

- Turnaround Planner

PSC said it could not only perform the hydroblasting the refinery required, but could do so using their ATL-3, remote-controlled maintenance unit, that could complete more work in less time than was possible using manual means. How much less? The refinery estimated the job would take 10 shifts of 12 hours each. PSC said it could do the job in just

3 shifts. The refinery was skeptical, but agreed to give PSC a try.

Using its ATL-3, delivering 20,000 psi (pounds per square inch) of water pressure instead of the usual 10,000 psi, PSC was able to clean five condensers in the time it took the previous company

to clean just one. Not only could PSC’s remote-controlled unit do the job faster than it had ever been done before, but it did so at a lower cost and with no safety issues. It was safer since no workers were required to hold pressure hoses in their hands.

PSC’s success essentially rewrote the refinery’s decades-long protocols for condenser cleaning. With the traditional manual methods it once relied on proven obsolete, the refiner now looks to PSC to establish new, higher standards for performance in the years ahead.

***21st century technology and timeless values yield industry-leading performance and innovation from PSC.***



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