



R. Baker & Son Completes JFK Airport Terminal 2 Demolition



Northeast-Braniff-Northwest Airlines Building



Last year, R. Baker & Son, a certified Minority/Women-Owned Business Enterprise (M/WBE), completed the demolition of Terminal 2 at John F. Kennedy International Airport as part of Port Authority’s multi-billion-dollar Vision Plan to expand and transform JFK into a world-class airport.

Terminal 2 was demolished to make way for New Terminal One (NTO), a state-of-the-art facility featuring 23 gates and more than 300,000 square feet of dining, retail, lounges, and recreational space. Port Authority is actively engaging M/WBE and service-disabled-veteran-owned businesses in all aspects of the project.

Originally opened in 1962 when JFK Airport was still known as Idlewild, Terminal 2 was a rectangular 250,000 sq. ft. building surrounded on three sides by 11 gates and a parasol canopy over the curbside entrance. Designed and built to serve as a combined terminal for Northeast, Braniff, and Northwest Airlines, it later became the home of Delta Airlines until its closure in January 2023.

The Project

The demolition of Terminal 2 required meticulous preparation and planning. Throughout the process, Baker worked hand-in-hand with the owner and project representatives to develop a detailed site-specific safety plan and coordinate lockout/tagout procedures to ensure the safe separation of all utilities.

Demolition took place 100 feet away from an active taxiway while construction of NTO was underway in an adjacent area. Dust control was a top priority, as airborne particles could potentially affect airport operations and aircraft engines. Baker implemented a multi-pronged approach, utilizing mist cannons, fire hoses, and fabric barriers to suppress dust.

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R. Baker & Son holds the distinction of being the oldest and largest Minority/Women-Owned Business Enterprise (M/WBE) Rigging, Dismantling & Demolition Contractor in North America





Demolition was accomplished using multiple excavators equipped with shear and grapple attachments. Another excavator was used to sort and separate demolition debris. All metal was collected and transported for recycling, while concrete was processed on-site and repurposed as recycled concrete aggregate (RCA). When the project reached grade level, the RCA was used as backfill, closing the loop on material reuse.

Through meticulous planning, dust mitigation strategies, and robust recycling initiatives, demolition proceeded safely and sustainably, paving the way for the modern NTO facility.

Port Authority of New York and New Jersey: A Brief History

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ) is a bi-state agency that oversees much of the metropolitan area's regional transportation infrastructure. It encompasses a 1,500-square-mile region within a 25-mile radius of the Statue of Liberty.



In the early 20th century, New York and New Jersey frequently clashed over rail freights, boundaries, transportation, maritime rights, and economic disputes. In 1921, after years of negotiation, the Port of New York Authority was established through an interstate compact authorized by the U.S. Congress to develop, modernize, and oversee rail and shipping terminals, transportation, and other facilities of commerce in the

Port District. It was renamed the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey in 1972. The Port Authority receives no tax money, instead operating on revenues from rents, tolls, fees, and facilities.

Today, PANYNJ operates six regional airports, the Port of New York and New Jersey seaport complex, the PATH rail transit system, all bridge and tunnel crossings, three major bus depots, including the Port Authority Bus Terminal, and The World Trade Center site. R. Baker & Son has participated in numerous PANYNJ projects, including the recent JFK Airport Terminal 2 demolition project.

Safety at the Forefront: R. Baker & Son's Principled Approach



At R. Baker & Son, safety is our absolute top priority. We invest substantial time and resources into comprehensive safety and training programs throughout the year, ensuring the well-being of our personnel, clients, and their property. This singular emphasis on safety sets us apart from many competitors in the industry.

We go beyond the mandatory safety training for our industry, requiring advanced and ongoing training for our workers. This includes specialized training in scaffolding, aerial lifts, forklifts, cranes, heavy equipment

operations, confined space entry, respiratory protection, fall protection, emergency response, first aid, lockout/tag-out procedures, CPR, and various other critical areas.

In contrast, it is not uncommon for others in our industry to only provide a subset of these advanced courses to their employees, and few require periodic retraining unless mandated. Why the discrepancy? Training is expensive and involves a significant amount of non-billable hours, and many contractors are reluctant to allocate the time or financial commitment.

Controlling Demolition Dust with Mist Cannon Technology

Demolition projects can release large amounts of dust into the air, posing serious health hazards and environmental risks. When inhaled, dust particles can irritate airways, exacerbate lung conditions like asthma, and, with excessive exposure, cause serious diseases such as silicosis and histoplasmosis. The dust can also contaminate the surrounding environment and reduce visibility on the job site.

One of the most effective methods R. Baker & Son uses to minimize demolition dust and maintain environmental compliance is the dust suppression misting system, also known as a mist cannon.



Mist cannons use a high-velocity fan to launch an atomized spray of ultra-fine water mist that collides with airborne dust particles, forming heavy droplets that fall to the ground. The falling droplets wet exposed surfaces, further preventing new dust clouds from forming. Mist cannons provide superior dust control while avoiding the drawbacks of traditional hose and sprinkler methods such as pools, mud, and heavily saturated debris. This technology plays a vital role in ensuring an environmentally responsible demolition process.