

Siegwerk's India unit completes two years of toluene-free manufacturing

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Siegwerk, one of the leading global suppliers of printing inks for packaging applications and labels, has announced that its India unit has completed two years of 100% toluene-free manufacturing operations.

According to a press release issued here by the company, it is the market leader in safe packaging inks, adhering to the highest safety standards and going beyond the legal requirements with the vision of supplying the safest inks worldwide for consumer safety.

Toluene has earned disrepute globally for its dangerous toxicological profile. The manifold adverse effects make it an issue related to consumer safety, occupational safety and environmental safety. Due to its developmental toxicity, toluene is officially classified as CMR category 2 (suspected of damaging the unborn child) in the EU.

Furthermore, when printing with toluene-based inks, there is an imminent risk of residual toluene in packaging being transferred to the packed food and beverages which impacts the organoleptic properties of the product thus leading to food quality and safety as well as legal compliance issues. The unfavourable toxicological properties of toluene are the reason why global brand owners like Nestle have restricted or even completely banned the usage of toluene in ink formulations intended for food packaging material of their products.

Pawan Kumar Agarwal, CEO, FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India), was recently quoted saying that they have already identified packaging safety as a critical subject and hence issued the Food Safety and Standards (Packaging) Regulations, 2018, making an attempt to raise the bar on packaging safety. He added that packaging materials should be of food grade quality which is safe and suitable for their intended use and should not endanger human health or result in an unacceptable change in the composition of the food or organoleptic characteristics.

With the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) still working on to bring an official ban on the use of toluene as a solvent for printing inks for food packaging, the company has already taken the decision to proactively ban the usage of toluene, in the best interest of its own employees as well as converters and finally of the consumers.

Ashish Pradhan, president, Siegwerk India and Greater China, said, "Siegwerk has a strong commitment to safe inks for all kinds of applications and has, as a result, committed to toluene-free production in India," adding, "The Siegwerk Bhiwadi site has been toluene-free for two years now."

The Germany-headquartered Siegwerk is already toluene-free across all other packaging ink factories in the world, having adopted this policy much earlier.