



Wilfried van Winden,
Indaver Site Waste Coordinator

Large-scale Aspen labelling project contributes to sustainable waste management

In the Dutch town of Oss, the international pharmaceutical company Aspen produces active raw materials for the production of medicines. Indaver has a long-term Total Waste Management (TWM) partnership with Aspen in which the focus is on sustainable and cost-efficient waste management. It involves effectively organised on-site collection, safe transport, fully compliant processing solutions, fully taking charge of administrative formalities, and striving for continuous improvement all these areas. How proper waste labelling also contributes to safety, sorting efficiency and cost saving is clarified in a discussion with Frank van Zonsbeek, Aspen Senior EHS & Waste Specialist, and Wilfried van Winden, Indaver Site Waste Coordinator.

Waste management runs smoothly without a hitch.

“As a pharma producer, Aspen’s generates pharmaceutical and chemical hazardous waste. Accordingly, it has the obligation to put a label on all properly packaged waste showing accurate information about dangerous properties (ADR symbols). Moreover, proper labelling is also conducive to efficient sorting of waste. Standardised and recognisable symbols with the same look and feel ensures that everyone present at the Aspen site is aware of the danger properties of the waste.”

enclosed container facility at the periphery of its site.

focus remains on continuously improving sustainable waste management for Aspen. The whole approach to waste labelling has not gone unnoticed. During various audits and a visit by corporate representatives from Aspen’s head office (South Africa), there was wide-spread approval of the professional and uniform labelling and signs.”

Correct and recognisable labelling ensures conformity during transport and delivery.

The large-scale labelling project which Indaver has worked out for Aspen proceeds in five stages. “A thorough study and close consultation led to an overview of the waste streams requiring labelling stickers and identification of the places where they are released. On-site visits showed whether and where there was physical room for labelling. The need was most urgent for stages 1 and 2 as the aim was to ensure accurate labelling of packaged waste (packaging some 180 different waste streams with up to four different danger symbols per label) and determining the means of collection (wheeled containers, wire trolleys). Next, in stage 3, some 100 collection sites were marked out and provided with clear notices. These signs and the zone demarcations make the location of the collection points clearly visible. This ensures that all Aspen employees and the waste collection operatives know where the waste should go, and stray wheeled containers are a thing of the past. It is also a significant improvement in terms of safety: thanks to the fixed location of waste collection facilities, there is improved access for workers and the fire brigade.”

No longer is it necessary for heavy trucks to drive onto the site, which makes for improved safety. At the sorting facility, there are access pathways to the containers and the containers remain in a fixed position. Indaver has installed impressive signs fixed on posts above the closed sliding-lid containers. As the containers can be loaded from the top and from the back, the signs are also readable from two sides. The main advantage of such a system is that the sign need no longer be exchanged or get lost during transport. The last phase, stage 5, includes clear waste separation instructions at source: labelling of waste-paper baskets inside the offices.”

“The principal challenge in this labelling project was its scope, in terms of the number of waste streams and the types of collection resources. Even though the project was very time consuming for Aspen and Indaver, it is a once-only exercise which saves Aspen some € 12 000 a year thanks to clear labelling. The entire project is the result of many years of constructive and transparent collaboration within the long-term partnership between Aspen and Indaver. Indeed, waste management now runs smoothly without a hitch.”

To date, Indaver has invested about € 25 000 in the project. “Although rolling out such a project and the once-only switchover require considerable effort, the impact in terms of safety and clarity is all-important. Aspen is sure that there can be no violations during transport and that all its waste is deposited in accordance with the law: well organised and with clear and recognisable labelling. Even though the project is reaching completion, the

“Stage 4 was the crown on the whole labelling project: super modern labelling at the brand-new waste sorting centre. Aspen has invested in a fully asphalted and

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Pharma giant MSD split up

In 2013, MSD sold one of its production components, Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (API) in Oss, to the South African pharmaceutical company Aspen. Aspen took over the production facility, including all approximately 960 staff and a number of generic products. MSD continues its activities in Oss with two large production departments, Pharmaceutical Operations and Biotech Operations.

MSD has closed its Research & Development centre in Oss. The buildings have been transferred to Pivot Park (life sciences). MSD and Aspen work closely together as MSD is one of Aspen’s customers for active pharmaceutical raw materials.