



News release

AkzoNobel

Tomorrow's Answers Today

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AkzoNobel develops innovative emergency response system for rail accidents involving chlorine

AkzoNobel Industrial Chemicals today introduced a new mobile emergency response system for accidents involving chlorine rail tank cars. Unique in Europe, the Mobile Hypo Unit (MHU) can be rapidly deployed anywhere in Germany and, if necessary, neighboring countries.

The unit can be used at the site of an accident to support the fast and safe conversion of chlorine gas to re-usable sodium hypochlorite, thus minimizing potential harm to people or the environment. The project has received funding from the German Ministry of the Environment from its program for environmental innovation.

"Transporting chlorine by rail is very safe," emphasized Knut Schwalenberg, Managing Director of AkzoNobel Industrial Chemicals GmbH. "In Germany, we've never had any accidents that have caused harm to people or the environment. We've contributed to this situation hugely. The development and introduction of special rail tank cars that meet the highest safety standards is one such example. The decision to build this innovative emergency response unit and to make it available, once again underlines our commitment as chlorine producers to act responsibly and to be ahead of the curve when it comes to safety. With the MHU we've built a system which can be used to minimize the potential risk to people and the environment in the immediate vicinity of an accident."

Compared to existing systems, this innovative emergency response unit offers a number of advantages. It can absorb ten times more chlorine gas and convert it into sodium hypochlorite. As a result, affected railways can be in service again more quickly. Moreover, the developing sodium hypochlorite is re-usable and does not have to be disposed of as hazardous waste. In addition, emissions hardly contain any chlorine gas and are even below legally required limit values.

In the event of an emergency, TUIS - the German chemical industry's transport accident information and rescue system, which is alerted by fire brigades when accidents involving chemicals occur - can request the help of the MHU and a specially trained operations team from AkzoNobel in Ibbenbüren.
