

This case study looks at the project submitted by the winner of the **workplace improvement** category of the 2004 Solvents Stewardship Awards: **Kartoflex** (Association of Dutch Producers of Cartons and Flexible Packaging).

ABOUT THE ORGANISATION



KARTOFLEX represents the Dutch carton and flexible packaging producers. The trade association, which was established in 1985, has approximately 100 members that jointly employ approximately 6500 people.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Within the framework of a negotiated agreement (Covenant) on occupational health and safety with the Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, both Kartoflex and KVGGO (the Dutch Trade Association for the Printing Industry) agreed to reduce the level of worker exposure to solvent vapours in flexography and packaging gravure. Cleaning was identified as the activity with the highest potential exposure levels in the printing and flexible packaging industry. The key focus of the programme was, therefore, to reduce exposure from cleaning flexo and packaging gravure presses and machine parts in flexible packaging companies.

An extensive programme was put in place which included the development of a comprehensive yet user friendly check list and guidelines which enable companies to easily determine their levels of exposure and, where appropriate, implement improvements.

Two workshops were organized to provide participants with additional information and advice on how to get the most from the new tools. During the workshops practical examples were used to demonstrate the differences in worker exposure that could



occur as a result of different cleaning practices. Cleaning activities were simulated to visually demonstrate the influence of different factors on solvent evaporation and exposure. The use of a PID (photo-ionisation detection) device enabled real time demonstrations of the exposure resulting from different cleaning practices. This proved to be an effective way of increasing awareness of actual industry exposure scenarios.

Nearly all member companies operating in flexible packaging attended the workshops, including a substantial number of SMEs.

OPINION OF THE JURY

The jury applauds this type of cooperation with governments and national authorities, in particular when a project aims to assist SMEs. The jury was impressed with a number of elements of this project: The fact that this project was directed at SMEs and that nearly all flexible packaging converters in the Netherlands participated in the workshops is an important achievement. The combination of the checklists, readers and workshops, that were developed to provide users with practical user-friendly tools, certainly helped in ensuring the success of the project.

SOLVENTS STEWARDSHIP AWARDS

The Solvent Stewardship Awards promote and encourage best practice and continuous improvements in the use of solvents. Awards are presented to companies and organisations that best demonstrate improvements in health, safety and environmental aspects in their use of solvents. The jury of the 2004 awards was composed of representatives of the following organisations: European Chemical News, European Commission - DG Enterprise, European Aerosol Federation, European Association of Craft Small and Medium Sized Enterprises and the European Chemical Industry Council.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information about Kartoflex, please visit www.kartoflex.nl or contact the secretariat: Laan Copes van Cattenburch 79, NL-2585 EW, The Hague, Tel.: +31-70-3123912, Fax: +31-70-3636348, E-mail: mail@kartoflex.nl