



NEWS RELEASE

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Sterilox helps NHS trust win top European health and safety award

Essex Rivers Healthcare NHS Trust has secured one of Europe's top health and safety awards with the help of Sterilox Technologies, the world's leading supplier of non-toxic disinfectants developed specifically for the healthcare sector. The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work annual award for good practice recognises the Trust's commitment to introducing Sterilox as a safe, non-toxic replacement for glutaraldehyde - a hazardous chemical disinfectant used for heat-sensitive medical equipment such as flexible endoscopes.

Representatives from the Trust and Sterilox collected the award last week at a ceremony in Bilbao, Spain. Essex Rivers Healthcare Trust, the only European hospital to win one of these coveted industry awards, was chosen from hundreds of submissions made by EU companies and organisations.

Commenting on the Trust's new award, John Thompson, Head of HSE's Chemical & Flammables Policy Division, said: "This is an excellent example of a hospital trust protecting its staff from the serious health risks caused by using glutaraldehyde - a major cause of occupational asthma. I warmly congratulate them. Their decision to change from glutaraldehyde to a safer substitute was taken after looking carefully at the alternatives."

The Trust's staff unanimously welcomed the introduction of Sterilox as a replacement for glutaraldehyde and immediately noticed an improvement to their working environment.

Rob Hartley, general manager at Sterilox Technologies added, "This is a great achievement for the management and staff at Essex Rivers. I just hope that the senior management of the 20 to 25% of hospitals which still expose their nurses to the unnecessary dangers of glutaraldehyde and other aldehyde-based disinfectants follow this example of best practice."

Glutaraldehyde is still used routinely by many hospitals to disinfect equipment between patients. The chemical is extremely toxic and exposure is known to cause anything from mild skin and respiratory irritation to full-scale occupational asthma. Several nurses have had to end their careers prematurely suffering from glutaraldehyde-induced occupational asthma.

Sterilox is a safe and proven alternative to glutaraldehyde – it is fast-acting, meets all microbiological and toxicological requirements, and has no known health effects. Sterilox solution is produced on site - from the electrolysis of saline – and does not require special protective handling or disposal procedures.

Sterilox produces a range of generators with different outputs to meet small- to large-scale requirements, as well as a series of automated washers for fast and effective reprocessing of equipment. SAFER, the latest washer to be added to the range, is so effective that it exceeds by 10,000-fold the published and recommended HTM2030 cleaning guidelines for automated endoscope reprocessors.

Notes to Editors

Sterilox is a non-toxic, non-hazardous, fast-acting broad-spectrum biocide. The disinfectant was developed for both rapid, cold sterilisation of heat-sensitive surgical instruments such as endoscopes, as well as for general disinfectant use in hospitals.

Sterilox's patented generators offer single-use application - for each patient as well as for each disinfecting cycle. They produce the powerful disinfectant, as required, from water and common salt (sodium chloride) - the main active component of the mixture is hypochlorous acid.

In addition to full clearance for use in the UK and Europe, Sterilox solutions also have multiple clearances from the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and have been cleared for use as surface disinfectants by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). These clearances are supported by one of the largest libraries of disinfectant microbiology available in the world today.

The company also supplies a complete range of generators and associated equipment, as well as Optident Sterilox, a disinfectant system developed specifically for the dental market.

The company is one of the UK's leading disinfectant suppliers with an approximate 20% share of the endoscope reprocessing market.

For further press information please refer to www.sterilox.com or call:
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For more information on the awards, please refer to www.hse.gov.uk/campaigns/ and www.osha.eu.int/ew2003/

