

Press release

October 29, 2014

AkzoNobel mimics nature to develop additive which makes roads safer

AkzoNobel has launched an additive for road salt which helps to protect against frost damage and makes driving safer.

Inspired by the ability of certain animals to withstand cold and prevent ice forming in their bodies, Ecosel®AsphaltProtection is a fully biodegradable additive for de-icing brine. It works by slowing the freezing process, resulting in soft, slushy ice, rather than hard, abrasive ice. After in-depth research and development, the product is available to customers in Italy and the Netherlands.

“Adding Ecosel®AsphaltProtection to normal winter road salt can reduce frost damage by around 50 percent,” explained Werner Fuhrmann, member of the AkzoNobel Executive Committee responsible for Specialty Chemicals. “Municipalities and governments will substantially benefit from the results – less need for road repairs, fewer traffic jams, lower maintenance costs and greater road safety.”

He added that by extending the service life of roads, CO₂ emissions will also fall, not only because of fewer traffic tailbacks, but also because there will be a reduced need for materials and energy for maintenance.

“The additive not only protects people and the planet, it also makes economic sense as it brings down the total cost of ownership,” continued Fuhrmann. “In addition, launching this product further highlights our strategy of sustainable innovation and represents the latest addition to our growing portfolio of eco-premium products.”

By mimicking nature, AkzoNobel researchers were able to tackle the repeated freeze-thaw cycles that affect asphalt mixtures. Water trapped inside asphalt expands by about 9 percent when it freezes, breaking up the road itself. Passing traffic then further accelerates the damage.

Ecosel®AsphaltProtection works by preventing the water trapped inside the asphalt pores from turning into hard ice. It encourages the formation of slushy ice, which is mechanically weaker than the asphalt and therefore substantially reduces the risk of damage.

Destined to be a key contributor to the Sustainability and Transportation pillars of the company’s Human Cities initiative, the new product was successfully tested in cooperation with the Dutch, Danish, Swedish and Austrian road authorities.

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AkzoNobel is a leading global paints and coatings company and a major producer of specialty chemicals. We supply industries and consumers worldwide with innovative products and are passionate about developing sustainable answers for our customers. Our portfolio includes well-known brands such as Dulux, Sikkens, International and Eka. Headquartered in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, we are consistently ranked as one of the leaders in the area of sustainability. With operations in more than 80 countries, our 50,000 people around the world are committed to delivering leading products and technologies to meet the growing demands of our fast-changing world.

Strawinskylaan 2555
1077 ZZ Amsterdam
P.O. Box 75730
1070 AS Amsterdam
The Netherlands

T + 31 20 502 7833
E media.relations@akzonobel.com
www.akzonobel.com

Not for publication – for more information

Corporate Media Relations
T +31 (0)20 – 502 7833
Contact: Vivi Hollert

Corporate Investor Relations
T +31 (0)20 – 502 7472
Contact: Lindsey Sanders

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