SIEGWERK

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Siegwerk receives RecyClass Technology Approval for NC-free printing solutions for PE and PP flexibles

RecyClass recognizes Siegwerk's innovative UR 62 (flexo) and UR 74 (gravure) inks as fully compatible with PE and PP flexible packaging recycling streams in Europe, proving that high-performance printing and recyclability can go hand in hand – a key step toward circular packaging.



Siegburg, Germany – March 27, 2026 — Siegwerk, one of the leading global providers of printing inks and coatings for packaging applications and labels, has received a RecyClass Technology Approval for two of its nitrocellulose (NC) free ink series, once again demonstrating its expertise in enabling circular packaging solutions. The new approval confirms that the flexo ink system UR 62 and the gravure ink system UR 74 are meeting the recyclability requirements for surface-printed PE and PP flexible packaging in Europe - the exact conditions can be found in the official approval letter. This latest achievement reinforces the

company's holistic approach to closing technical performance gaps and driving sustainable packaging as part of its “RethINK Packaging” strategy.

NC-free inks as a cornerstone of recyclable flexible packaging design

With their excellent printability, high heat resistance, quick drying capabilities, and excellent adhesion to various surfaces, NC-based inks have long been a commonly used solvent ink type in flexo and gravure printing. At the same time, however, they are increasingly recognized as a critical obstacle to high-quality mechanical recycling of flexible packaging. Due to the limited thermal stability of nitrocellulose, NC-based inks can lead to an unpleasant odor, discoloration and reduced recyclate quality. With ever-evolving Design for Recycling requirements across Europe and worldwide, the replacement of nitrocellulose has therefore become a key lever for the recyclability of packaging.

That’s why Siegwerk has been systematically developing and expanding its portfolio of NC-free ink solutions for flexible packaging. These alternatives to NC-based inks are designed to support recyclable packaging structures while maintaining the high printing and converting performance required in industrial flexographic and gravure applications. While conventional PU-based lamination inks have long enabled reliable NC-free solutions and are fully recognized by RecyClass for their recyclability, they have not been suitable for surface printing - making the development of new NC-free surface systems essential to unlock a broader spectrum of technically demanding applications.. The portfolio is bundled in Siegwerk’s NC-free toolbox, which provides converters and brand owners with a structured approach to implementing NC-free printing solutions across surface and lamination applications.

"Switching to NC-free inks is a decisive step for recyclable flexible packaging, especially in surface printing,” said Dr. Björn Ewig, Head of Technology Flexible Packaging EMEA at Siegwerk. “Our focus has been to develop NC-free alternatives that work reliably in industrial production and meet recyclability

requirements without compromising on print or packaging performance." For all its NC-free solutions, Siegwerk relies on a set of proprietary, self-developed polyurethane binders as a replacement for nitrocellulose, which has already proven itself in terms of excellent printability and high heat and mechanical resistance.

RecyClass Technology Approval for UR 62 and UR 74

With the RecyClass Technology Approval for UR 62 (flexo) and UR 74 (gravure), Siegwerk offers brand owners and converters independent proof that these NC-free inks enable recyclable PE and PP flexible packaging. This third-party validation simplifies material and ink selection for designs that meet current and upcoming Design for Recycling requirements, reducing risk and accelerating the transition to circular packaging. "Our customers need solutions that combine print performance with proven recyclability," explained Ralf Leineweber, Head of Global Technology Development at Siegwerk. "This approval now gives them the confidence to make the right decisions, supporting the overall trend toward circular packaging concepts." By expanding its NC-free portfolio with RecyClass-approved inks, Siegwerk further strengthens its role as a partner for sustainable packaging innovation - helping customers close technical gaps and achieve compliance without compromising on quality or efficiency.

Note: The RecyClass technology approval is granted for the ink technology itself and does not constitute a recyclability certification of a final packaging. Packaging using the approved technology must still be assessed as a whole and comply with the applicable Design for Recycling Guidelines. The full conditions and scope of the approval are detailed in the official RecyClass Technology Approval Letter, available here: UR 62 and UR 74.

More about Siegwerk's NC-free ink toolbox for high-performing and recyclable flexible packaging solutions can be found here:

https://www.siegwerk.com/en/inks-coatings/circular-economy-solutions/nc-free-ink-toolbox.html

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