



## Press Release: ExxonMobil Fawley Chemicals units help in fight against COVID-19

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As the worldwide battle against COVID-19 continues, ExxonMobil Fawley is playing its part in fighting the disease, in particular by becoming a key player in the vaccine supply chain.

The site's Chemicals units are responsible for supplying a range of products that are being used to combat COVID-19. Among these products is halobutyl rubber, a key component in the production of the vials that hold the COVID-19 vaccines. Jamie Renshaw, Fawley's Chemicals Technical Manager, said: "Halobutyl rubber creates a strong, impermeable barrier which lends itself perfectly for use in the production of pharmaceutical bottle stoppers, used to keep injectable medicines sealed and sterile. The rubber creates a re-sealable barrier, which does not fragment when pierced by the needle of syringe, as required for a COVID-19 vaccine vial."

As the race to produce vaccines has gathered pace, so has the demand for the all-important vials. Jamie said: "By providing approximately 70 per cent of all ExxonMobil pharmaceutical grade rubber, Fawley is making a significant contribution to the COVID-19 vaccine supply chain. In fact, we believe that in the region of half of all the rubber that goes into the vial stoppers globally may originate from Fawley."

As well as halobutyl rubber, Fawley's Chemicals plant produces a range of liquids that are also helping the COVID-19 fight. For example, Fawley is an integral part of ExxonMobil's global Isopar™ production, making four different grades of high-purity synthetic isoparaffin – branded as Isopar™. These fluids can be used in the manufacture of a variety of medical products, including sterile packaging and cleaning agents.

In addition, Fawley is the only site within the global ExxonMobil circuit to produce Methyl Ethyl Ketone, a chemical liquid commonly known as MEK. MEK plays a key role in the production of pharmaceuticals, as does Secondary Butyl Alcohol (SBA), produced as part of the MEK process. Both fluids can be used in the manufacturing process as solvents.

Fawley also produces a range of higher olefins, versatile chemical intermediates used in any number of important industrial and consumer products. The higher olefins made at Fawley are transported to ExxonMobil's Rotterdam site for further processing into alcohols, and eventually plasticisers. Due to their hygienic performance, these plasticisers are used in the production of hospital flooring, vinyl stretch ceilings and wall coverings. Recently, the plasticisers have been used in the Madrid equivalent of the Nightingale Hospital. During the pandemic, Fawley's higher olefins production has played a crucial role in the production of PPE, including protective goggles, vinyl gloves, and personal facemasks.

Finally, Fawley is a significant contributor to ExxonMobil global production of Exxal™ 8, an alcohol used in the production of a special type of adhesive found in masks and respirators. This adhesive can also be used to attach surgical products, such as drapes and electrodes, to patients in hospitals.

Jamie said: “As we are all only too well aware, COVID-19 continues to be a massive global challenge, affecting whole populations in ways that most of us would not have predicted just over a year ago. Throughout the pandemic, ExxonMobil Fawley has remained a reliable supplier to the pharmaceutical industry, making sure that we play our part in the fight against this disease.”

Pictured: Fawley’s Butyl plant produces a large percentage of the rubber used in COVID-19 vaccine vials.