

Mitsui Chemicals to Exit Resorcinol Business in Wake of Plant Accident

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Mitsui Chemicals decided to withdraw from the resorcinol business following the accident that occurred in April at its Iwakuni-Ohtake plant. Explanation of its plan to customers was begun in the middle of this month. The company and Sumitomo Chemical are the only producers in Japan of resorcinol, an adhesive for wood and tires. After Mitsui's exit, Sumitomo will be the sole remaining producer, but with the depressed state of the Japanese economy of late, the impact on supply to domestic users is expected to be minimal. The explosion and fire in the Iwakuni-Ohtake plant in Yamaguchi Prefecture originated at the resorcinol production facility. Instead of resurrecting the facility, Mitsui will cease sales once its current inventory is exhausted and said that the manufacture of other products at the plant would be unaffected. The decision leaves only the cymene and hydroquinone facilities to be restarted, as all the other production facilities at the site are back in operation. The hydroquinone facility underwent an on-the-spot inspection on November 26 by relevant authorities as part of a program for plant improvements submitted by Mitsui. If the program is approved, construction in accordance with the program will be carried out, followed by the submission of a report and another inspection by the authorities, after which a restart will be targeted. Mitsui plans to reconstruct the cymene facility.

Source Japan Chemical Web