

New Laboratory with Hazardous Materials Requires RJA's Code Consulting Services

Challenge. MedImmune Inc., part of the AstraZeneca group of companies, is headquartered in Gaithersburg, Maryland, and has facilities in Pennsylvania, California, Kentucky, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. The biotech company relocated its corporate headquarters to a new state-of-the-art facility in March 2004. MedImmune currently has three products on the market – an antibody to prevent lower respiratory tract disease, an agent for chemotherapy and radiotherapy patients, and a nasal spray flu vaccine – and it has additional products in clinical testing.

Rolf Jensen & Associates (RJA) was contracted to provide code consulting services to MedImmune. The project involved the development of 15,000 square feet of space in the headquarters building that had been built out, but were not in use at the time. As part of MedImmune's plan to expand its cancer research capabilities, the company required RJA's services to properly plan for the storage and usage of chemicals and other hazardous materials within this new laboratory space while meeting applicable fire and life safety codes.

Solution. RJA reviewed the design team's drawings at the schematic and design development phase and prepared a fire protection/life safety report. RJA's consulting services included undergoing a complete HAZMAT analysis, which entailed preparing reports about the hazardous materials that MedImmune anticipated using in that portion of their overall laboratory facility. RJA inventoried MedImmune's list of materials and classified each chemical and hazardous material, based on how dangerous it was from a fire or toxicity perspective.

Once RJA completed its hazardous materials list, RJA assisted the design team in laying out control areas. RJA established control areas with fire-resistant walls and floors that separated the laboratory from the rest of the building and stayed within the specified level of materials allowable within each area. In that way, RJA enabled MedImmune to keep the building from being classified as a hazardous occupancy, which would have required explosion-proof venting and other specialized hazardous design features. The control area concept was consistent with MedImmune's design methodology in other portions of the building.

Beyond defining the control area separations, RJA's fire protection/life safety report spelled out other criteria, including emergency egress, fire resistance ratings, fire alarms, sprinklers and interior finishes. This information was critical in enabling the architect to complete the design work, as well as for consultants, such as mechanical engineers, who worked on the sprinkler design and electrical engineers who worked on the fire alarm design.

Result. To ensure the safety of building occupants and protect the sensitive nature and large dollar value of the commodities to be used in the laboratory, RJA successfully formulated code compliant solutions that addressed the complex life safety and fire challenges of MedImmune's new development project.



■ Code Consulting



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