Prepared for the future: MHH puts new logistics centre into operation

Central location, state-of-the-art technology and standardised processes

Hannover Medical School (MHH) has put its new logistics centre into operation. In the building on Stadtfelddamm, everything is gathered in one place: the reprocessing unit for medical products (AEMP), the fine order picking warehouse, the central goods receiving department, the mailroom and the transport service. Supported by state-of-the-art technology, this significantly improves the logistics processes at the University. In addition, the new location has another advantage. "At Stadtfelddamm, the logistics centre is ideally located in terms of transport. Also in view of the new MHH building, we are therefore well prepared for the future," says Andreas Kohlhase, the head of Division IV responsible for logistics. In total, the logistics centre covers an area of about 5,000 square metres on two levels.

One entrance for all goods

Previously, the four logistics areas were located in different places on the MHH grounds. Thanks to the centralisation, many synergy potentials can now be used. This starts with the loading ramp at the central goods entrance. Previously, only foodstuffs could be delivered there, but now different and several suppliers unload their freight there at the same time. The delivery windows are closely timed. The central goods receiving area has a storage space of about 200 square metres. There, the employees sort the goods and forward them either directly to the recipients on campus, to the picking warehouse or to the food warehouse. Around 300 packages go out here every day. The transport service distributes the goods throughout the MHH campus. In total, it serves more than 1,000 recipients.

Letters, parcels and laboratory samples

The mailroom is located directly next to the goods receiving area. In bright and friendly rooms, the team sorts the mail into collection boxes - down to individual wards and organisational units. About 3,000 letters and 60 parcels arrive here every day from outside. In addition, between 200 and 300 samples are sent to the central laboratory for examination. About the same amount of mail arrives internally. There are eight postal tours daily on the MHH premises. Two transport vehicles supply the university's external offices.

One of the largest central sterilisation facilities in Germany

The largest area of the logistics centre is the reprocessing for medical devices (AEMP), also called central sterilisation. "Here it’s all about speed, precision and safety," emphasises Andreas Kohlhase. On a total of 1,200 square metres, surgical instruments and other medical instruments and equipment are cleaned, disinfected and sterilised according to legal requirements. The 67 employees work from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. in a two-shift system - also on weekends. Every month they provide 30,000 sterile containers, for example with instrument trays or individual instruments.
"The instruments are becoming smaller and smaller and more specialised, the legal requirements for the reprocessing of these instruments are constantly increasing - therefore the reprocessing process is also becoming increasingly complex," explains Sören Brauer, Head of the Reprocessing Department in the Logistics Division. The cleaning processes are correspondingly high-tech. For example, ultrasound is used to clean the instruments from robot-assisted surgery. All processes in the AEMP are controlled and electronically documented. Each tray is given a barcode and is individually loaded with the instruments requested by the individual operating theatres. The AEMP is one of the largest and most modern in Germany.

Order picking according to individual needs

In fine commissioning, sterile medical finished products such as catheters, abdominal drapes and syringes are stored and put together for requirements, for example in the operating theatre. These are either so-called basic sets or additional sets for specific surgical procedures. Here, too, they are packed individually and according to requirements. The nine-member team only picks manually. It serves all operating theatres of the MHH and numerous wards.

"With the logistics centre at a central location and with the new machine equipment, we have succeeded in standardising and optimising the logistical processes," emphasises Andreas Kohlhase. The so-called cross-docking zone also provides synergies. This is an area where goods from the different areas of the logistics centre are brought together and then transported to the same recipient at specific times by transport trolley - this is another way in which the MHH is well prepared for the future in terms of logistics.

SERVICE:
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One of the washing system in the reprocessing unit for medical devices (AEMP). Copyright: "Karin Kaiser / MHH"
On the ramp of the logistics centre: Andreas Kohlhase, Head of Business Unit IV (right) with Ansgar Kruth, Head of Department for Transport and Materials Management (left) and Sören Brauer, Head of Department Reprocessing (centre).

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