

1-8392-002-3

ADVISORY

September, 1983

NEWS OF INTEREST TO THE PVC AND VCM INDUSTRIES

SURVEY ON FOOD CONTACT USES FOR PVC AND CO- POLYMERS SUBMITTED TO FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION

On August 17, a survey requested by the Food and Drug Administration was submitted to provide that Agency with an estimate of the extent of current usage of polyvinyl chloride (PVC) and its copolymers in food contact applications. Also included was an estimate of the quantity expected to be used five years after FDA action restating satisfactory status of such polymers.

According to the results of the survey conducted by the law firm of Keller and Heckman, approximately 7.8% of the diet is currently packaged in PVC materials. If FDA takes positive action in 1983 confirming the suitability of PVC for all food-contact applications, the survey projects that the percent of diet packaged in PVC will increase in five years to 11.2%.

In submitting this survey to FDA, Jerome H. Heckman, Vinyl Institute and SPI General Counsel, noted that the success of the survey is "a tribute to the efforts of the members of The Vinyl Institute, other SPI members active in the PVC food-contact market such as American Hoechst, Ethyl Corporation, Klockner Pentaplast, and Union Carbide, as well as outside groups such as the Institute of Shortening and Edible Oils and Procter & Gamble Company."

It is hoped that the completion of this survey will permit FDA to clarify the regulatory status of PVC in the very near future so that the long-standing effort for reapproval of PVC liquor bottles by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) will become a reality.

SHORTCOMINGS OF PITTSBURGH TOXICITY TEST PROTOCOL HIGH- LIGHTED IN RECENT MAILING

The following letter, recently mailed by a Vinyl Institute member, the B. F. Goodrich Chemical Group, to approximately 2,500 of its polyvinyl chloride and chlorinated polyvinyl chloride (CPVC) customers clearly highlights the problems surrounding the use of the Pittsburgh protocol for combustion toxicity evaluation:

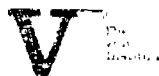
"The August, 1983 issue of Plastics World magazine contains an article about the controversy surrounding the combustion toxicity of plastics compared to other construction materials.

Regrettably, in a table accompanying the article, Plastics World chose to reproduce a toxicity ranking of building materials based on the so-called "Pittsburgh protocol" developed by Dr. Yves Alarie and recently endorsed by Arthur D. Little, Inc. Alarie's method places several common plastics, including PVC and CPVC, at the top of the toxicity list.

The Pittsburgh protocol, however, has a number of shortcomings:

1. Of all combustion toxicity tests, the Pittsburgh method is the only one that indicates exceptional toxicity hazards among plastics.

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2. A more respected test, developed by the U.S. Government's National Bureau of Standards, shows such plastics as PVC and CPVC to have the same magnitude of toxicity as ordinary wood.
3. The Arthur D. Little study endorses the Pittsburgh protocol (a simple laboratory experiment) because it is easy to use. Yet the authors admit that (a) they could not reproduce Alarie's results, and (b) the National Bureau of Standards test has more relevance to real fire conditions.

But most importantly:

4. Fire hazard is by no means wholly dependent on smoke toxicity. Resistance to ignition, rate of flame spread and contribution to fuel load also determine how "safe" a product is.

All organic materials, of course, release toxic gases when forced to burn

We simply thought you'd like to know the facts."

Dr. Michael M. O'Mara, Chairman of the VI Technical Committee and Nora C. Jacobs, a member of the VI Communications Committee, will be meeting with the editor of Plastics World magazine on September 28 to discuss the article and to attempt to correct the misinformation that it contains.

AdVisory thought you'd like to know the facts, too.

CALIFORNIA STUDY SHOWS
NO EVIDENCE OF WATER
CONTAMINATION FROM
CHEMICAL PERMEATION OF
PLASTIC PIPE

Some good news from California for a change! A recent report issued by the California Department of Health Services on water sampling in the Coyote Hills homes in Fullerton, California shows that there is no evidence that any chemical waste, such as those from nearby oil refinery and old oil field sump pumps, is permeating through plastic pipes into the drinking water supplies. The study also found that in most cases, there is no evidence of chemicals leaching from the plastic pipe or glue into the water. Further samples are to be taken from one home because of low levels of toluene and tetrahydrofuran found in that one case. This study was carried out because it had been alleged that water was contaminated from chemicals permeating through these pipes.

LOW COST VINYL MAKES
ITS MARK AS A MOLDING
RESIN

The July, 1983 issue of Plastics World indicates that improvements in PVC's processability as well as enhanced property profiles are resulting in the steadily growing use of PVC in television backs, business and communication equipment housings and in appliance components. It is anticipated that between 70 and 80 million pounds of PVC will be injection molded this year and twice that amount as soon as 1985 according to projections of B. F. Goodrich Chemical. Other Vinyl Institute companies supplying injection moldable PVC include Occidental Chemical, Conoco Chemicals, Tenneco Polymers and Borden Chemical.

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