

Vinyl Plastics: Part of Everyday Life

- *Used in hundreds of products, by nearly every industry.*
- *Largest use for vinyl is in construction.*
- *One of the most time-tested synthetic materials in use today.*
- *Critical to many quality-of-life products.*

Vinyl Plastics: Part of Everyday Life

Vinyl (polyvinyl chloride, or PVC), is the second largest volume plastic produced in the world. U.S. production alone currently exceeds 10 billion pounds annually; over 40 billion pounds are produced worldwide each year. Applications are found in virtually every industry, including health care, communications, aerospace, automotive, retailing, textiles, construction, durable goods and agriculture.

Major Uses for Vinyl

- **Construction**-house siding; water distribution, irrigation and sewer pipe; wire and cable insulation; electrical conduit; floor and wall coverings; window frames; gutters and downspouts; single-ply roofing; landfill liners; piping used in food processing, chemical processing and other manufacturing; fire-sprinkler piping; fencing.
- **Automotive**-body side moldings, windshield system components, interior upholstery, under-the-hood wiring, under-the-car abrasion coatings, floor mats; adhesives and sealants; other components such as dashboards and arm
- **Consumer goods**- toys, sporting goods, footwear, credit cards, swimming pool liners, patio furniture, garden hoses, upholstery fabric, shower curtains.
- **Electronics/appliances**- keyboards; component housing jacketing for electrical cords; fiber optics; floppy disk jackets; various parts and components in phone systems, power tools, refrigerators, washers, air conditioners, computers.
- **Medical products**- surgical gloves, blood bags, IV bags, tubing, heart catheters, single-dose medication packaging.
- **Packaging**-rigid bottles, flexible meat wrap, shrink wrap, blister packaging, tamper-evident shrink bands, bottle caps and liners.

Facts at a Glance

- Over 50 percent of all vinyl produced is used by the construction industry, and more vinyl is used in construction than any other plastic. Hence, vinyl is often referred to as the "infrastructure plastic."
- Vinyl products were first introduced over 50 years ago, making it one of the most time-tested synthetic materials in use today. (The first major use was as a rubber insulation replacement for wiring on U.S. ships during World War II.)
- PVC water pipe economically delivers pure water to even the most remote location; PVC irrigation pipe helps increase crop yields; PVC sewer pipe helps insure the integrity of waste water handling systems.
- Vinyl medical goods and pharmaceutical packaging provide a higher, safer standard of health care.
- Vinyl's inherent flame retardance has made it the dominant material for many electrical uses, and has helped make electrical service safer and more dependable.
- Vinyl's durability and comparative low cost helps make housing more affordable.
- Vinyl packaging helps reduce food spoilage and waste, and is virtually unreplaceable in meat wrap.

1993 U.S. Vinyl Production By Market (in millions of pounds)

Pipe, fittings, conduit 4,490	Transportation 120
Siding and panels 1,130	Furniture 89
Electrical/electronics 530	Wall coverings 61
Packaging 494	Toys 41
Windows, other profiles 432	Lighting fixtures 31
Flooring 408	Resellers, compounders 440

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Housewares 201	Exports 1,340
Vapor barriers, pool liners 164	Other 290
Appliances 148	
TOTAL 10,409	

(Source: Modern Plastics, January 1994)

*The Vinyl Institute
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