

Property

Product Name: PFA.
Chemical Name and Synonym: Perfluoroalkoxy alkanes.

Material Names

PFA is sold under a variety of brand names including Teflon-PFA, Hostafion-PFA and Chemflur.

PFA

Perfluoroalkoxy alkanes (PFA) are fluoropolymers. They are copolymers of tetrafluoroethylene (C₂F₄) and perfluoroethers (C₂F₃OR_f, where R_f is a perfluorinated group such as trifluoromethyl (CF₃)). The properties of these polymers are similar to those of polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE). Compared to PTFE, PFA has better anti-stick properties and higher chemical resistance, at the expense of lesser scratch resistance. Unlike with PTFE, the alkoxy substituents allow the polymer to be melt-processed. On a molecular level, PFA polymers have a smaller chain length and higher chain entanglement than other fluoropolymers. They also contain an oxygen atom at the branches. This results in materials that are more translucent and have improved flow and creep resistance, with thermal stability close to or exceeding PTFE. Thus, PFA is preferred when extended service is required in hostile environments involving chemical, thermal, and mechanical stress. PFA offers high melt strength, stability at high processing temperatures, excellent crack and stress resistance and a low coefficient of friction. Similarly enhanced processing properties are found in fluorinated ethylene propylene (FEP), the copolymer of tetrafluoroethylene and hexafluoropropylene. However FEP is ten times less capable of withstanding repeated bending without fracture than PFA.

Allgemeine Beschreibung

PFA ist ein perfluorierter, teilkristalliner, thermoplastischer Kunststoff. Er vereint die hervorragenden chemischen Eigenschaften von PTFE mit den mechanisch-technischen Eigenschaften von Poly-Fluorethylenpropylen (FEP).

Verwendung

PFA ist, wie alle perfluorierten Kunststoffe, sehr chemikalienresistent und temperaturbeständig. Es findet daher im Chemieanlagen- und im Laborbau verbreitete Anwendung, sowohl als Beschichtungswerkstoff für thermisch dauerbelastete, korrosionsgefährdete Konstruktionen als auch für Labor-Kleinmaterialien, wie Schläuche, Fittings und Dichtungen. Seiner antiadhäsiven Eigenschaften halber wird PFA auch für substanzkontaktierende Bauteile und Gefäße in chemischen Spurenanalysegeräten verbaut. Da PFA die strengen FDA-Richtlinien erfüllt, kann es ebenso im Apparatebau für die Lebensmittel- und Pharmaindustrie eingesetzt werden.

PFA ersetzt vor allem bei Großserienprodukten gewichts- und kostenmindernd metallische oder keramische Werkstoffe. Da PFA UV-strahlungsbeständig ist, kann es ohne weiteres für Außenkonstruktionen eingesetzt werden.

Die herausragenden elektrischen Eigenschaften des Kunststoffs PFA haben auch Einsatzgebiete in der Starkstromtechnik und Elektronik erschlossen, etwa für Hochleistungs-Kabel- und Drahtisolierungen.

PFA wird als Granulat für die Weiterverarbeitung zu Halbzeugen, wie Folien, Platten, Profilen, Stäben, Schläuchen und Rohren, sowie für die Massenproduktion von Fertig-Kleinteilen angeboten.

Perfluoroalkoxy alkanes, in common with other per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, are widespread in the environment, so durable that they are referred to as "forever chemicals", and have detrimental health concerns not yet fully understood.

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Applications

PFA is commonly used as a material for piping and as fittings for aggressive chemicals, as well as the corrosion-resistant lining of vessels in the chemical-processing industry. Typical applications include the construction of gas scrubbers, reactors, containment vessels and piping. In coal-fired power plants, it is used for lining heat exchangers. By channeling crude gas through a PFA-lined apparatus, the gas stream can be cooled below its condensation temperature without damaging the heat exchanger. Its use contributes to increasing the efficiency of the whole plant.

PFA is also used to make sampling equipment in analytical chemistry and for geochemical or environmental in situ studies in the field, when it is particularly important to avoid chemical contamination from metallic ions at trace levels.

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