

Chemical Resistance of Polycarbonate Products

Palram Technical Support Department



The mechanism of chemical attack on thermoplastic sheets differs significantly from the mechanism of corrosion of metals. Corrosion of metals results in a gradual loss of surface material as a result of electrolytic action by the relevant chemicals. In the cases where chemical attack on polycarbonate sheet occurs, all or a portion of a range of effects can be observed. Ethylene chloride, chloroform, tetrachloroethane, m-cresol, pyridine and other chemicals can cause partial dissolution of polycarbonate. Swelling agents include benzene, chlorobenzene, tetralin, acetone, ethyl acetate, acetonitrile and carbon tetrachloride. Additional effects include color change and/or whitening. These effects may not always lead to product failure, especially for non-loaded sheets. Nevertheless, the level of measured mechanical properties will be reduced. The most critical effect of chemical attack is stress cracking or crazing, which may range in size from being visible to the naked eye to being only observable under a microscope. Stress cracks will always result in sheet failure, which will develop from areas of greatest stress (screws, fixings, bends, etc.)

Polycarbonate sheets are generally not recommended for use with acetone, ketones, ethers, and aromatic and chlorinated hydrocarbons in addition to aqueous or alcoholic alkaline solutions, ammonia gas and its solutions and amines.

Polycarbonate is resistant to mineral acids, many organic acids, oxidizing and reducing agents, neutral and acid salt solutions, many greases, waxes and oils, saturated, aliphatic and cycloaliphatic hydrocarbons and alcohols, with the exception of methyl alcohol. The resistance of polycarbonate to water may be described as good up to approximately 60 °C. At higher temperatures, degradation occurs, the extent of which depends on time and temperature. Polycarbonate should therefore not be exposed for long periods of time to hot water. However, brief contact with hot water has no effect. For example, polycarbonate tableware can be washed over 1000 times in a dishwashing machine with no adverse effects being observed.

The table that appears in the following pages lists the resistance of polycarbonate sheets to a number of commonly encountered chemicals and other corrosive media at room temperature. (Information on chemical resistance at higher temperatures will be supplied upon request). Where the chemical resistance varies with concentration, the results of tests at different concentrations is presented. (Note that information on compatible adhesives and sealants can be found in a separate leaflet which will be supplied upon request) It serves as a basis for recommendation. PALRAM does not guarantee chemical resistance, unless specific tests are carried and separate documentation is supplied.

For chemicals and corrosive media not mentioned in the list, please contact your PALRAM representative. He will place you in contact with the PALRAM R&D & Technology Department.

The table on the following pages uses the following key:

R - Resistant

LR - Limited Resistance (gradual attack over time may occur)

N - Not Resistant (rapid attack or attack over short time period will occur)

Inasmuch as PALRAM Industries has no control over the use to which others may put the product, it does not guarantee that the same results as those described herein will be obtained. Each user of the product should make his own tests to determine the product's suitability for his own particular use including the suitability of environmental conditions for the product. Statements concerning possible or suggested uses of the products described herein are not to be construed as constituting a license under any PALRAM Industries patent covering such use or as recommendations for use of such products in the infringement of any patent. PALRAM Industries or its distributors cannot be held responsible for any losses incurred through incorrect installation of the product. In accordance with our Company policy of continual product development you are advised to check with your local PALRAM Industries supplier to ensure that you have obtained the most up to date information.



Chemical Resistance of Polycarbonate Products at Room Temperature

Chemical	Concentration %*	Resistance	Chemical	Concentration %*	Resistance
Acetaldehyde		N	Butane		R
Acetic Acid	10	R	Butter		R
Acetic Acid	25 (concentrated)	LR (N)	Butyl Acetate		N
Acetone		N	Butyl Alcohol (Butanol)		R
Acetylene		R	Butylene Glycol		R
Acrylonitrile		N	Butyric Acid		N
Ajax Detergent		R	Calcium Chloride	Saturated	R
Allspice		N	Calcium Hypochlorite		R
Allyl Alcohol		LR	Calcium Nitrate		R
Alum (Aluminum Ammonium Sulfate)		R	Calcium Soap Fat		R
Aluminum Chloride	Saturated	R	Camphor Oil		N
Aluminum Oxalate		R	Carbolic Acid		N
Aluminum Sulfate	Saturated	R	Carbon Bisulfite		N
Ammonia (Gas)		N	Carbon Dioxide Gas (Moist)		R
Ammonia (Aqueous)		N	Carbon Disulfide		N
Ammonium Carbonate		LR	Carbon Monoxide		R
Ammonium Chloride		R	Carbon Tetrachloride		N
Ammonium Fluoride		N	Castor Oil		R
Ammonium Hydroxide		N	Catsup (Ketchup)		R
Ammonium Nitrate		R	Caustic Potash (Potassium Hydroxide)		N
Ammonium Sulfate	Saturated	R	Caustic Soda (Sodium Hydroxide)		N
Ammonium Sulfide		N	Chlorine Gas (Dry)		LR
Amyl Acetate		N	Chlorine Gas (Wet)		N
Amyl Alcohol		LR	Chlorobenzene		N
Aniline		N	Chloroform		N
Antimony Trichloride	Saturated	R	Chocolate		R
Aqua Regia (3 parts HCl:1 part HNO ₃)		LR	Chrome Alum	Saturated	R
Arsenic Acid	20	R	Chromic Acid	20	R
Automatic Switch Grease		R	Cinnamon		R
Automotive Waxes		LR	Citric Acid	10	R
Baby Lotion		R	Cloves		N
Bacon Fat		R	Coal Gas		R
Barium Chloride		R	Coca Cola		LR
Battery Acid		R	Cocoa		LR
Beer		R	Cod Liver Oil		R
Beet Syrup		R	Coffee		LR
Benzaldehyde		N	Cooking Oil		R
Benzene		N	Copper Sulfate	Saturated	R
Benzoic Acid		N	Cresol		N
Benzyl Alcohol		N	Cupric Chloride	Saturated	R
Betadine		R	Cuprous Chloride	Saturated	R
Bleach (Clorox)		R	Cyclohexane		R
Blood and Blood Plasma		R	Cyclohexanol		LR
Borax		R	Cyclohexanone		N
Boric Acid		R	DDT		R
Brake Fluid		N	Dekalin		R
Bromine		N	Detergent (most)		LR or R
Bromobenzene		N	Developing Solutions		N or LR

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**concentration of aqueous solution except where noted*

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Chemical	Concentration %*	Resistance	Chemical	Concentration %*	Resistance
Diamyl Phthalate		N	Kerosene		N
Diesel Fuel		R	Lactic Acid	20	R
Diethyl Ether (Ethyl Ether)		N	Lacquers and Thinners		N
Dimethyl Formaldehyde (DMF)		N	Laundry Detergents (Most)		LR or R
Dimethyl Sulfoxide (DMSO)		N	Ligroin (Hydrocarbon Mixture)		R
Dinonyl Phthalate (plasticizer)		LR	Lime Solution (2%) or paste		R
Doctyl Phthalate (plasticizer)		LR	Liquors or Liqueurs		R
Dioxane		N	Linseed Oil		R
Diphyl 5,3		LR	Loctite		N
Ethanol (Ethyl Alcohol) and Water	96	R	Lubricating Oils (Most)		LR or R
Ethanol (Ethyl Alcohol)	Pure	LR	Machine Oils (Most)		R
Ethyl Amine		N	Magnesium Chloride	Saturated	R
Ethyl Acetate		N	Magnesium Sulfate	Saturated	R
Ethyl Bromide		N	Manganese Sulfate	Saturated	R
Ethylene Chloride		N	Margarine		R
Ethylene Chlorohydrin		N	Mayonnaise		R
Ethylene Dichloride		N	Meat		R
Ethylene Glycol (Antifreeze)		LR	Mercuric Chloride	Saturated	R
Ferric Chloride	Saturated	R	Mercury		R
Ferrous Sulfate		R	Methane		R
Fish and Fish Oils		R	Methanol (Methyl Alcohol)	Pure	LR
Floor Polish		R	Methylamine		N
Formalin	10%	R	Methylcellulose		N
Formic Acid	10% (30%)	R (LR)	Methylene Chloride		N
Freon TF		R	Methyl Ethyl Keton (MEK)		N
Freon (all others)		N	Methylmethacrylate		N
Fruit Juices and Pulp		R	Milk		R
Gasoline		N	Mineral Oil		R
Gear Oil		R	Motor Oils (Most)		LR or R
Glazers Putty		R	Mustard		R
Glucose		R	Naphtha (Stanisol)		N
Glycerine		R	Nickel Sulfate		R
Glycerol		R	Nitric Acid	20	R
Glycols		R	Nitrobenzene		N
Glutaraldehyde	50%	R	Nitropropane		N
Grease, Automotive (Most)		R	Nitrous Oxide		N
Heptane		R	Nutmeg		N
Hexane		R	Oleic Acid		R
Hydrazine		N	Onions		R
Hydrochloric Acid	20 (Concentrated)	R (N)	Oxalic Acid	10	R
Hydrofluoric Acid	20	R	Oxygen		R
Hydrogen Peroxide	30	R	Ozone		N
Hydrogen Sulfide		R	Paprika		R
Iodine (aqueous solution)	5	R	Paraffin		R
Iodine		N	Pentane		R
Inks (Most)		R	Pepper		R
Isoamyl Alcohol		LR	Perchloric Acid	10 (concentrated)	R (LR)
Isopropyl Alcohol		R	Perchloroethylene		N

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Chemical	Concentration %*	Resistance	Chemical	Concentration %*	Resistance
Petroleum		LR	Sodium Sulfide		N
Petroleum Ether		LR	Sodium Thiosulfate		R
Petroleum Oil (Refined)		R	Spindle Oil		R
Phenol		N	Stannous Chloride		R
Phosphoric Acid	10	R	Starch		R
Phosphorous Oxychloride		R	Styrene		N
Phosphorous Pentoxide	25	LR	Sugar	Saturated	R
Phosphorous Trichloride		N	Sulfur Dioxide (Gas)		R
Polyethylene		R	Sulfuric Acid	<50 (50<70)	R (LR)
Polyethylene Glycol		R	Sulfurous Acid	10	N
Potassium Acetate		LR	Sulfuryl Chloride		N
Potassium Aluminum Alum (Sulfate)	Saturated	R	Tapping Oil		R
Potassium Bichromate		R	Tartaric Acid	30	R
Potassium Bromate		R	Tear Gas (Chloracetophenone)		LR
Potassium Bromide		R	Terpineol		N
Potassium Chloride	Saturated	R	Tetrahydrofuran		N
Potassium Cyanide		N	Tetralin		N
Potassium Dichromate	Saturated	R	Thiophene		N
Potassium Hydroxide		N	Thyme		R
Potassium Metabisulfite	4	R	Titanium Tetrachloride		R
Potassium Nitrate	Saturated	R	Tobacco		R
Potassium Perchlorate	10	R	Toluene		N
Potassium Permanganate	10	R	Transformer Oils		R
Potassium Persulfate	10	R	Transmission Fluid		R
Potassium Rhodanide	Saturated	R	Trichloroacetic Acid	20	LR
Potassium Sulfate	Saturated	R	Trichloroethylamine		N
Propane		R	Trichloroethylene		N
Propargyl Alcohol		R	Trichloroethylphosphate		LR
Propionic Acid	20	R	Tricresylphosphite		N
Propionic Acid	Concentrated	N	Trisodium Phosphate		R
Propyl Alcohol (1-Propanol)		R	Turpentine		LR
Pyridine		N	Urea		R
Salad Oil		R	Vacuum Pump Oil		R
Salt		R	Vanilla		R
Silicofluoric Acid	30	R	Vanillin		R
Silicone Grease		R	Varnish		N
Silicone Oil		R	Vaseline		R
Silver Nitrate		R	Vegetable Juices		R
Soap (Ivory)		R	Vegetable Oils		R
Sodium Bicarbonate	Saturated	R	Vinegar		R
Sodium Bisulfate	Saturated	R	Water (Demineralized or Sea)		R
Sodium Bisulfite	Saturated	R	White Spirit		N
Sodium Carbonate	Saturated	R	Wine, Whiskey, Vodka, Rum, Cognac		R
Sodium Chlorate		R	Witch Hazel		R
Sodium Chloride	Saturated	R	Worcester Sauce		R
Sodium Chromate		R	Xylene		N
Sodium Hydroxide		N	Zinc Chloride		R
Sodium Hypochlorite	5% Chlorine	R	Zinc Oxide		R
Sodium Nitrate		N	Zinc Stearate		R
Sodium Sulfate	Saturated	R	Zinc Sulfate		R

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The chemical resistance information in this table is based on our research and experience and may be considered solely as a basis for recommendation, but not as a guarantee, unless specifically furnished as such by PALRAM.